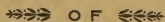


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GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—

A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH

CHAPTERS I.—XXXIX.

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THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH

CHAPTERS I.—XXXIX.

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PREFACE

BY THE

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE present General Editor for the Old Testament in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges desires to say that, in accordance with the policy of his predecessor the Bishop of Worcester, he does not hold himself responsible for the particular interpretations adopted or for the opinions expressed by the editors of the several Books, nor has he endeavoured to bring them into agreement with one another. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion in regard to many questions of criticism and interpretation, and it seems best that these differences should find free expression in different volumes. He has endeavoured to secure, as far as possible, that the general scope and character of the series should be observed, and that views which have a reasonable claim to consideration should not be ignored, but he has felt it best that the final responsibility should, in general, rest with the individual contributors.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK.

CAMBRIDGE,

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* * * The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

ISRAEL AND ASSYRIA IN THE TIME OF ISAIAH.

ISAIAH is the most distinguished of the remarkable group of prophets who enforced the lessons of the Assyrian crisis in the eighth century B.C. His public career, which covers the last 40 years of the century, was nearly co-extensive with the successive reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah; and during the greater part of that period he exercised a commanding political influence in Jerusalem. Of no other prophet can it be said with so much truth that his biography is the history of his time. In the case of his predecessors Amos and Hosea, or of his contemporary Micah, a general knowledge of the internal condition of the country and its foreign relations may suffice for the understanding of their writings; but for any profitable study of the work of Isaiah the indispensable preliminary is a somewhat minute acquaintance with the course of events both at home and abroad. It is all the more necessary that this should be briefly sketched here, because the biblical narrative has been so largely illustrated and supplemented from outside sources, especially through the decipherment of the Assyrian inscriptions.

The great political fact of the time was the westward extension of the Assyrian Empire. This commenced in earnest, after a pause of 40 years, with the accession of Tiglath-pileser III. in 745; and was thenceforward prosecuted by a succession of vigorous monarchs, till it reached its goal in the conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon (672). It must have been

evident to thoughtful observers, even before Isaiah's entrance on public life, that the independent existence of all the smaller nations of Western Asia was endangered by the steady advance of this new and formidable power. Singly, they were helpless against the solid and disciplined might of Assyria; while at the same time they possessed too little stability of purpose to present a united front to the common enemy. The two Israelitish kingdoms, from their geographical position, ought to have been amongst the last to come into collision with the Assyrian power, and if they had been wise enough to keep aloof from political entanglements they would at least have secured a breathing space in which much might have been accomplished for the furtherance of those moral and religious interests which the prophets had at heart. The short-sighted policy of their rulers, however, involved them in premature and compromising relations with the Assyrian Empire; and in both cases with disastrous results.

Before we proceed to fill in the details of the narrative it is necessary to glance at the condition of the country at the opening of Isaiah's ministry.

THE AGE OF UZZIAH. The death of Uzziah (or Azariah)¹ after a successful reign of about 50 years, marks the close of a singularly brilliant chapter in the history of both North and South Israel. The crippling of Damascus in the Assyrian campaigns of 797 and 773 afforded to the kingdom of Samaria an opportunity of recovering from the long Syrian wars by which its strength had been exhausted. Under the strong rule of Jeroboam II. the bounds of the empire were extended almost to the utmost limits of David's conquests (2 Ki. xiv. 25; Am. vi. 14); and wealth no doubt began to flow in rapidly from the tribute of the subjugated states. Under Uzziah, Judah appears to have been nearly as prosperous. The conquest of Edom and the restoration of the Red Sea port of Elath (2 Ki. xiv. 22) secured the control of the caravan trade with Southern Arabia; and the revenue obtained from this source seems to have been

¹ On the date of his death, see Chronological Note, p. lxxv f.

wisely applied to develop the resources of the country and perfect its military efficiency (see 2 Chron. xxvi. 1—15). The result was that when Isaiah began his public work Judah had attained a degree of wealth, power and civilisation which must have placed it, along with Israel, in the front rank of the petty principalities that now separated Egypt from Assyria. "The land was full of silver and gold and there was no end of its treasures; the land was full of horses and there was no end of their chariots" (Is. ii. 7).

But this remarkable outburst of material prosperity was attended in both kingdoms by an aggravation of the social evils which seem inseparable from every oriental system of government. The influx of wealth appears to have accelerated certain economic changes, affecting large masses of the population, against which the prophets at all times loudly protested. The spread of debauchery and luxury amongst the upper classes (Is. iii. 16—23; v. 11, 12, 22; xxviii. 1—8; xxxii. 9 ff.) was a natural consequence of the increased means of enjoyment which came to these classes from the improved position of the country. But still greater evils followed from the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few. The rise of great landed estates (Is. v. 8; Mic. ii. 2, 9) meant the expropriation of the old peasant proprietors, who had been the strength of the state, and the creation of a destitute and landless lower class. And if anything were wanting to enhance the indignation of the prophets at this glaring contrast between the extremes of poverty and luxury, it was found in the methods by which it was brought about. The eviction of the smaller land owners was largely effected by systematic abuses of the forms of justice, corrupt judges favouring the suit of the rich man against the poor, in return for a share of the spoils (Is. i. 23; iii. 14, 15; v. 23; x. 1, 2; xxix. 21). Hence the writings of the prophets abound in denunciations of the injustice and oppression, the avarice and licentiousness which prevailed in the higher ranks of society at this time (see also Is. i. 17; v. 7). And although it may be true that these were permanent features in the life of the Hebrew commonwealth, and would have attracted the attention of the prophets in any period, "

cannot be doubted that they were all greatly aggravated by the peculiar social conditions of the age of Uzziah.

In these evidences of national declension and disorder the prophets of the time read the sure premonition of a terrible day of judgment. But their anxiety was not shared by the governing classes either in Samaria or Jerusalem. In both capitals a spirit of optimism and careless security prevailed in political circles (Am. vi. 1, 13). The strange lull in the conquering career of Assyria which preceded the accession of Tiglath-pileser appears to have fostered the delusion that all danger from that quarter had passed away. About the time when Isaiah appears on the scene, however, events took place which ought to have effectually dispelled that notion. The capture of Arpad (*circa* 740), and Hamath (738), and the intervention of Pul (Tiglath-pileser) in the reign of Menahem (2 Ki. xv. 19) brought the danger close to the doors of North Israel. If it be the case, as is held by some Assyriologists, that Uzziah himself, shortly before his death, suffered a defeat at the hands of Tiglath-pileser¹, the lesson cannot have been altogether lost upon Judah. But no trace of such a disaster is found in the Old Testament; nor do the earliest writings of Isaiah suggest that there was any general uneasiness with regard to the immediate prospects of the country.

THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITIC WAR (*c.* 735). Perhaps the event which first roused the politicians of Jerusalem from their dream of security was an indirect consequence of the forward movement of Assyria. In 735, shortly after Ahaz ascended the throne, a combined attack on Judah was planned by Rezin and Pekah the kings of Syria and Ephraim. The war, indeed, seems to

¹ In two passages of the annals of Tiglath-pileser, referring apparently to the year 739 or 738, an Azria'u of Ja-udi is mentioned as the leading member of a strong coalition formed for the defence of Hamath. The question that divides Assyriologists is of course whether this prince is identical with Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah, or whether he was the otherwise unknown ruler of a kingdom in North Syria, which is alluded to in other inscriptions. If the former view be correct it can hardly mean less than that Judah was the foremost military power in Western Asia at the time. The arguments on both sides are succinctly given by McCurdy, *History Prophecy and the Monuments*, pp. 413 f.

have commenced before the death of Jotham¹ (2 Ki. xv. 37); but it is clear from Is. vii. 1, 2 that some fresh and startling development followed the accession of Ahaz, causing the utmost consternation in Jerusalem. From all we know of the character of Ahaz he was a man little fitted to cope with a crisis of this magnitude. In his panic-stricken imagination, the immediate peril overrode all considerations of national honour and political prudence, and he resolved to throw himself on the protection of the king of Assyria. This decision has been defended by some modern historians, as that which would have recommended itself to any statesman in similar circumstances. It is safer to trust the unerring political sagacity of Isaiah, in whose judgment Ahaz at this juncture played the part of a craven. A calmer view of the situation would have convinced the king that the danger was not so great as to justify what was on the face of it a counsel of despair. Nor is it clear that he gained any substantial advantage in return for his tribute and his offer of submission. For although Tiglath-pileser promptly responded to his appeal by ravaging the Northern and Eastern districts of Israel (2 Ki. xv. 29)², this was probably no more than he would have done of his own initiative. He was not likely to permit his feudatories to carry on wars of conquest on their own account, and if Ahaz had but shared the courage and faith of Isaiah, deliverance would have come without the degrading and dangerous conditions implied by the Assyrian suzerainty. (See Introductory Note on ch. vii., p. 49 f.)

THE FALL OF SAMARIA (c. 721). Judah had thus, by the deliberate act of her sovereign, passed under the hard yoke of the king of Assyria. It was long, however, before the evil consequences of this fatal step became fully apparent. Ahaz appears to have remained steadfast in his allegiance to Tiglath-pileser, and he

¹ Whose independent reign, however, must have been very short. See Chronological Note.

² The Assyrian monuments shew that this expedition took place in 734; and this fixes approximately the date of the Syro-Ephraimitic war. The chastisement of Damascus (2 Ki. xvi. 9) took place about two years later.

died (probably in 727¹) bequeathing the legacy of political servitude and a galling tribute to his son and successor Hezekiah. In 727 Tiglath-pileser was succeeded by Shalmaneser IV. The change of sovereign was the signal for a revolt of several of the recently subjugated provinces in the West, where Egyptian intrigue was now busily fomenting disaffection towards the Assyrian government. There is no evidence that Hezekiah was involved in any treasonable negotiations at this time, although we may be certain that great pressure would be brought to bear on him to join the conspiracy. In Samaria, however, the efforts of the Egyptian party were successful. Hoshea, the last king, opened communications with Sevé² of Egypt, and renounced his allegiance to Assyria by withholding the annual tribute. When Shalmaneser advanced against him he seems to have surrendered, but his subjects prepared to defend the capital to the last. After a siege of three years Samaria was captured about 721; and the kingdom of the Ten Tribes was finally incorporated in the Assyrian Empire (2 Ki. xvii. 3—6).

EVENTS IN THE REIGN OF SARGON (722—705). The siege of Samaria, begun by Shalmaneser, was brought to a conclusion under Sargon, who succeeded to the throne in 722. In the first years of his reign, whilst he was occupied with the affairs of Babylon, the still smouldering insurrection in Palestine suddenly assumed such formidable dimensions as to threaten the loss of nearly the whole territory annexed by Tiglath-pileser. But in the year 720 Sargon himself marched westwards, and so effectually crushed all opposition that for nearly ten years he seems to have had no more trouble in that region. He penetrated as far south as Gaza and terminated a successful campaign by defeating the allied Philistine and Egyptian troops in the battle of Raphia, near that city. The event is memorable as the first armed collision of the rival powers of Egypt and Assyria.

¹ On this disputed date, see again the Chronological Note, p. lxxvi f.

² In the Hebrew text pointed so as to read Sô; in Assyrian *Sab'é*, or *Sib'i*. He is frequently identified with the Ethiopian king Sabako, supposed at this time to be the over-lord of Egypt. The identification is questioned by some, who take *Sab'é* to be one of the kings who ruled in Lower Egypt.

Throughout these troubles Judah had maintained an attitude of wise neutrality which is probably in part at least to be attributed to Isaiah's influence with the court. The first definite indication of the growing restiveness of Judah occurs in an inscription of Sargon relating to the year 711. He speaks of "[the inhabitants] of Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab who...had to bring tribute and presents to Asshur, my lord" but who now "mediated hostilities and plotted evil, who...sent their tokens of homage to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them, and sought an alliance with him¹." The focus of the conspiracy on this occasion seems to have been the Philistine city of Ashdod, against which Sargon despatched an expedition under the Tartan or commander-in-chief (Is. xx. 1). With the capture of that city the insurrection collapsed. Hezekiah appears to have withdrawn from the league in time to escape the vengeance of Sargon. The hypothesis of an Assyrian invasion of Judah at this date, at one time adopted by some high authorities as throwing light on certain important prophecies of Isaiah, has never commanded general acceptance, and is now practically abandoned².

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION (701). We now come to the last and most eventful period of Isaiah's long ministry. The early years of Sennacherib's reign (from 705) seemed to the advisers of Hezekiah a favourable opportunity for a determined effort

¹ The embassy of Merodach-baladan (Is. xxxix.) probably belongs to this period (c. 713).

² Cheyne, who held this view in 1889, has now pronounced against it. The campaign against Ashdod is fully narrated in an inscription of Sargon, who of course takes the whole credit of it to himself, and writes as if he had commanded the army in person. If an invasion of Judah had taken place at this time the silence of the inscription with regard to it would be inexplicable. There is indeed another inscription of Sargon's, in which he speaks of himself as "the subduer of the land of Judah, whose situation is far distant," and this has sometimes been appealed to in confirmation of the theory under discussion. But the tablet on which these words occur is now held to be the earliest of all the extant records of Sargon's reign, and is assigned by Winckler to the year 717. Whatever, therefore, may be the exact meaning of that expression, it certainly cannot be adduced as evidence of an expedition against Judah in the year 711.

to shake off the supremacy of Assyria. In the year following the accession of Sennacherib, a new monarch succeeded to the crown of the Ethiopian kingdom of Napata. This was the able and enterprising Tirhakah (Egyptian, *Taharqa*; Assyrian, *Targu*), who ultimately asserted his sway over the whole of the Nile-valley; and vigorously adopted the policy of check-mating Assyria by stirring up disaffection amongst the Assyrian vassal states in Palestine. At the same time Sennacherib had a formidable opponent in Babylon, in the person of the Chaldaean rebel Merodach-baladan, who had already for twelve years defied the power of Sargon, and had been subdued only with great difficulty. Sennacherib was hardly seated on the throne when this doughty champion of Babylonian independence reappeared on the scene, and eventually (before 702) succeeded in establishing himself once more as king of Babylon. It has been very generally supposed that it was at this time that Merodach-baladan sent his embassy to Hezekiah soliciting his cooperation against the king of Assyria. Although this view seems less probable than that which assigns the event to the reign of Sargon (see p. xv), it is certain that the revolt of Babylon seriously embarrassed Sennacherib, and had an important influence on the course of events in Palestine. There is little doubt, at all events, that the Ethiopian embassy, mentioned in ch. xviii., was sent by Tirhakah, and falls within this period (between 704 and 701). The temptation proved irresistible. Hezekiah's scruples were overcome, Isaiah's remonstrances being overborne by the influence of the Egyptian party in the court, and Judah was definitely committed to rebellion by the conclusion of a treaty with Egypt¹.

¹ A difficult point emerges here on account of our uncertainty as to the precise relations between Tirhakah and Egypt at this time. The question is whether Tirhakah as yet possessed the effective suzerainty over Egypt which he ultimately attained, or whether the kings of Egypt still acted with a certain measure of independence in matters of foreign policy. On the former alternative the alliance with Egypt referred to in ch. xxviii.—xxxi. was really an alliance with Tirhakah, and stands in the closest connexion with the incident of ch. xviii. But if the latter be correct, the negotiations with Egypt may have been quite independent of the overtures of Tirhakah. The view followed in this volume

Having once taken the irrevocable step, Hezekiah seems to have acted with great spirit and energy. His chief care was naturally bestowed on the defence of his capital, and we learn from Sennacherib's inscriptions that with this object he strengthened the garrison of Jerusalem by enlisting a force of Arabs and other mercenaries. A further indication of the leading part he played in the confederacy is furnished by the fact that Padi, the Assyrian vassal-king of Ekron, having been dethroned and imprisoned by his subjects, was sent to Jerusalem for safe custody. The dangerous pre-eminence thus accorded to Judah by the revolted states made a reconciliation with Assyria impossible; and thus while other kings (as those of Ammon, Moab and Edom) escaped by tendering their submission, Hezekiah had to bear the brunt of Sennacherib's vengeance.

It was not till his third campaign that Sennacherib, having previously "accomplished the destruction of Merodach-baladan," was able to turn his attention to the state of affairs in the West. The incidents of that famous expedition are recorded with great fulness of detail in no fewer than three practically identical inscriptions of Sennacherib, the best known of which (the so-called "Taylor-Prism") is translated in the *Records of the Past* (New Series, vol. VI. pp. 80 ff.). In these official narratives the campaign is divided into four stages: (1) the subjugation of the Phœnician cities, (2) the chastisement of Tsidqa, king of Ashkelon, (3) the operations against Ekron, and (4) the invasion of Judah. The first two of these may here be passed over as not immediately bearing on our subject. The people of Ekron, as we have already seen, had deposed their king Padi, and sent him in chains to Hezekiah. At the approach of the Assyrian king they "feared in their hearts"; but before Sennacherib could proceed to the siege of the city he had to encounter "a force without number" of Egyptians and Arabs which was marching

is that ch. xxviii.—xxxi. refers to intrigues with the petty princes of the Delta, that it was these kings whom Sennacherib defeated at Eltekeh (see p. xviii), and that the rumour of Tirhakah's advance (ch. xxxvii. 9) warned Sennacherib of a conflict with a far more formidable enemy than any he had yet encountered. The *precise* date of the Ethiopian embassy must therefore remain a matter of uncertainty.

to the relief of Ekron. The engagement took place at Eltekeh (Josh. xix. 44; xxi. 23); and although Sennacherib claims a decisive victory, it has been pointed out that the record omits the elaborate enumeration of the spoils which usually adorns the accounts of really important victories of Assyrian kings. The Egyptians, however, failed in their main object; Ekron was speedily reduced, and stern punishment was meted out to the ringleaders of the rebellion. In order to complete what he has to say about Ekron the annalist here relates the surrender of Padi by Hezekiah, and his restoration to the throne; but this no doubt slightly anticipates the actual course of events. Next follows the account of the operations against Judah, which may best be given in Sennacherib's own words. "But Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, I besieged 46 of his strong cities, fortresses, and small cities of their environs without number, (and) by casting down their walls(?).....I took them. 200,150 men, young (and) old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen and sheep without number I brought out from them, I counted them as spoil. Himself I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem his royal city; the walls I fortified against him (and) whosoever came out of the gates of the city I turned back. His cities, which I had plundered, I divided from his land and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, to Padi, king of Ekron, and to Tsil-bal, king of Gaza, and (thus) diminished his territory. To the former tribute, paid yearly, I added the tribute of alliance of my lordship and laid that upon him. Hezekiah himself was overwhelmed by the fear of the brightness of my lordship; the Arabians and his other faithful warriors whom as a defence for Jerusalem his royal city he had brought in, fell into fear. With 30 talents of gold (and) 800 talents of silver, precious stones.....a heavy treasure and his daughters, his women of the palace, his young men and young women, to Nineveh the city of my lordship, I caused to be brought after me, and he sent his ambassadors to give tribute and to pay homage¹."

¹ *Rec. of the Past*, Vol. VI. pp. 90 f. For other translations see Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Test.* (Engl. Transl.

We must now compare this circumstantial and undoubtedly, in the main, reliable narrative with the corresponding account in 2 Ki. xviii. 13—xix. 37 (cf. Is. xxxvi., xxxvii.). We are at once struck by their remarkable agreement with regard to certain leading features of the campaign. Both relate (1) the capture of the "fenced cities" of Judah, (2) the investment of Jerusalem by an Assyrian army, (3) the submission of Hezekiah and the exaction of a heavy tribute; and another important point of correspondence is (4) that Sennacherib himself does not claim to have effected the reduction of Jerusalem. But there is one essential difference between the two records: whereas Sennacherib represents Hezekiah's surrender as the consequence of the siege of Jerusalem, the Hebrew historian places it before the assault on the capital. It is obviously of the utmost importance for the understanding of Isaiah's work that a satisfactory solution of this discrepancy should be obtained, and a number of widely diverging theories have been propounded with that object. One suggestion is that Sennacherib has purposely falsified the sequence of events in order to give the appearance of success to what was really an abortive attack on Jerusalem¹. Other critics have supposed that the biblical narrative combines the accounts of two entirely different Assyrian invasions of Judah, one in 701 and another near the close of Sennacherib's reign². But of this second campaign no independent evidence whatever has been discovered. The most reasonable supposition after all is that Sennacherib's narrative simply breaks off before reaching the last and most unfortunate stage of the campaign, in other words that the Old Testament parallel to the Assyrian account is found in 2 Ki. xviii. 13—16, while the subsequent narrative of *vv.* 17 ff. refers to events passed over in

Vol. I. pp. 280 ff.), and *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, Vol. II. pp. 95—97.

¹ So Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscr.* Vol. I. p. 301.

² This theory seems to have been first started by the two Rawlinsons. See G. Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. II. p. 165 (2nd Ed.). In a modified form it is still upheld by Winckler (*Geschichte Bab. u. Assy.* p. 254). A similar view, once prevalent, was that 2 Kings xviii. 13 (14)—16 refers to Sargon's supposed campaign in 711 and what follows to Sennacherib's in 701.

silence by the inscription. There is no improbability in the assumption that Jerusalem was twice blockaded in the course of the war, provided a sufficient motive can be assigned for a renewal of hostilities on the part of Sennacherib. Such a motive is readily enough suggested by the situation in which the Assyrian king found himself towards the close of this campaign; and in this way we are led to a conception of the progress of events which, if not altogether free from difficulty, has commended itself to many of the best critics as affording the most satisfactory solution of a somewhat intricate problem.

We must assume, then, that after the terms of capitulation had been arranged and after the first siege of Jerusalem had been raised, Sennacherib saw reason to change his mind, and to insist on the absolute surrender of the capital. His position at the end of an arduous campaign, and in front of an enemy who might at any time be reinforced from Ethiopia, was becoming daily more critical, and he probably realised that it would be a strategical blunder of the worst kind to leave an important fortress like Jerusalem in the hands of so doubtful a vassal as Hezekiah. It is possible also that Hezekiah, encouraged by the rumour of Tirhakah's advance, may have been indiscreet enough to exhibit some indication of a hostile disposition. At all events, the steps now taken by Sennacherib reveal at once his eagerness to obtain possession of Jerusalem, and his inability to direct the whole force of his army against it. We are told, indeed, that he sent from Lachish, "a great host" with the Rabshakeh and other officers to demand the surrender of Jerusalem; but it is evident that the display of force was merely a stratagem, and that the Great King relied mainly on the eloquent tongue of his chief minister. The object of the mission, in fact, was in the first instance to intimidate Hezekiah by threats, and failing that to induce the people to rise up against him. But Hezekiah, now acting under Isaiah's advice, declined to enter into fresh negotiations, and the officers retired baffled to Lachish. A second attempt¹ to play on the fears

¹ Unless, indeed, we have here two parallel accounts of a single occurrence. See Introductory Note on ch. xxxvi. f.

of Hezekiah by means of a royal letter met with no better success, and Sennacherib was obliged to proceed southwards, leaving Jerusalem still unreduced in his rear.

The state of matters within the walls of Jerusalem during this crisis will fall to be more fully considered in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that the resolute attitude of the king was due solely to the lofty faith and courage of Isaiah and his confident and reiterated predictions that the Assyrian should not be permitted to inflict the smallest injury on Jerusalem (ch. xxxvii. 6, 7; 21—35). These anticipations were more than realised, when in a single night "the angel of the Lord...smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand" (xxxvii. 36), and Sennacherib was compelled to return to his own land¹. The political consequences of this mysterious calamity, as read in the light of our fuller knowledge of Assyrian history, may seem meagre and disappointing. It is now known that Sennacherib survived the catastrophe for 20 years and during that time waged many successful wars. It is certain also that the deliverance did not permanently affect the relations of Judah to the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrian monarchs still exacted their yearly tribute from the kings of Jerusalem and treated them as their subjects. On the other hand it may well be doubted whether Sennacherib was able to enforce the hard conditions which he imposed on Hezekiah at the time of his submission². The very fact that during the 20 remaining years of his reign he never again appeared in Palestine, or renewed the attack on Egypt, is sufficient proof that his policy was permanently altered by the serious disaster which there befel him. But if we measure the crisis by the spiritual interests that were at stake we shall find that it possesses an importance that cannot be over-estimated. Whatever may be uncertain, it is certain that the political existence of Judah was then saved from seemingly inevitable extinction. If Sennacherib had attained his object the people would have been led into captivity (see ch. xxxvi. 17). Israel would have perished as a nation, and with it the hopes on which the religious future of humanity depended would have

¹ See further on ch. xxxvii. 36.

² See above, p. xviii.

been lost. That this result was averted was due to the inspiration which guided Isaiah throughout his life and to the providential interposition which crowned his prophecies with their fulfilment. The events of 701 form, therefore, a fitting close to the public career of the great prophet, who from this time vanishes from the stage of history.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE AND PROPHETIC ACTIVITY OF ISAIAH.

OF Isaiah's private life very few details can be gathered from his writings. We know that he grew up to manhood under the brilliant reign of Uzziah, and he must have been still a young man, though probably married, when in the year of that king's death he received his call to the prophetic office. His name, in Hebrew *Yēsha'yāhū* ("salvation of Jehovah") appears not to have been an uncommon one in Israel (1 Chr. xxv. 3, 15; xxvi. 25; iii. 21; Ezra viii. 7, 19; Neh. xi. 7), and although to the prophet himself it had a symbolic significance as embodying a cardinal principle of his ministry (ch. viii. 18), it throws no light on the circumstances of his birth or the religious disposition of his parents. Of his father Amoz nothing further is known. The fancied resemblance of his name to that of the prophet Amos does not exist in the original, and the notion that the younger prophet was the son of the older was only the speculation of some Greek, ignorant of Hebrew orthography. Equally worthless is the Jewish tradition which makes Amoz a brother of king Amaziah, and Isaiah consequently a member of the royal house of Judah. From the fact, however, that Isaiah was intimately acquainted with the ways of the court and had at all times ready access to the presence of the king, as well as from a certain aristocratic loftiness of thought which appears in his writings, we may probably conclude that he belonged to a good family and had enjoyed all the advantages of education and social intercourse that were

open to the son of a prominent citizen of Jerusalem. Of the religious influences that moulded his youthful character little can be said. It is possible that a great earthquake in the days of Uzziah (Am. i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5) may have left an ineffaceable impression on his mind and furnished the imagery for his first and most powerful delineation of the great day of Jehovah (ch. ii. 12 ff.). But Isaiah was not left to interpret the signs of the times by his own unaided reflections. He had "a more sure word of prophecy" in the teaching of his own immediate predecessors Amos and Hosea. Two years before the earthquake Amos had appeared at Bethel with a message of doom which sent a momentary thrill of terror through the whole northern kingdom (Am. vii. 10). His work in North Israel was continued by Hosea, whose career preceded that of Isaiah by a very short interval. The influence of both these prophets can be clearly traced in the earlier discourses of Isaiah, and it is reasonable to suppose that before his own call his mind was thus imbued with those great prophetic principles to which he was destined to give such forcible expression.

It was amidst the forebodings naturally suggested by the death of Uzziah that Isaiah became conscious of his prophetic vocation. The statement that he first saw the Lord "in the year that king Uzziah died" has doubtless something more than a mere chronological interest. The aged monarch, who had so well upheld the credit of the State, was either just dead or else in the last stages of leprosy. The recent history of the kingdom of Samaria furnished an ominous warning of the troubles that might follow the removal of a capable ruler at such a time; and it may be that Isaiah had a presentiment that the death of this king would be the prelude to a period of anarchy and confusion such as he afterwards pictured as a feature of the divine judgment on Israel's sin (ch. iii. 1 ff.). The significance of the vision of ch. vi. becomes at least somewhat more intelligible to our minds if we regard it as the answer to apprehensions such as these. At a time when his thoughts were occupied with the decease of a sovereign whom he had learned to revere as the embodiment of wise and experienced statesmanship, there was

granted to Isaiah a revelation of Him who was the true divine King of Israel; and at the same time he gained a perception of the ultimate issues of Jehovah's dealings with the nation which enabled him to face the dark and threatening future with confidence and hope.

The spiritual truths impressed on the prophet's mind by this memorable experience are those which we shall see unfolded with singular clearness and constancy of purpose throughout his whole subsequent ministry. An exposition of these truths in their connexion will be attempted in a subsequent chapter, but it is necessary here to specify certain elements of the vision whose influence appears at all stages of Isaiah's career. Of these the first and most fundamental is an overwhelming sense of the majesty and holiness of Jehovah, the God of Israel. These aspects of the divine nature are prominent in nearly every page of his writings, and the prophet's sense of them is undoubtedly to be traced to that supreme moment of his spiritual history when his eyes saw the King, Jehovah of Hosts, and he shrank in terror from the contact of his holiness (ch. vi. 5). In the second place, Isaiah was then possessed by the consciousness of a life-long mission to be discharged in the service of the divine King as His messenger and spokesman to Israel. The alacrity with which he offers himself for this work, without knowing what it might involve, is a revelation of the ardent temperament of the man and contrasts strikingly with the hesitation displayed by another great prophet at a similar moment of his life (ch. vi. 8; cf. Jer. i. 6). But Isaiah further learned something of the nature and effects of the work to which he was thus consecrated. It is a gloomy and discouraging prospect that is disclosed to him,—a people so hardened in unbelief that the very abundance of his revelations and the urgency of his appeals will only render them more and more insensible to spiritual influences, while step by step the inevitable judgment is executed upon them until the existing nation of Israel has been utterly consumed (ch. vi. 9—13). And finally the vision contains a ray of hope in the promise of an indestructible remnant in Israel, a "holy seed" or spiritual kernel of the nation, which

shall survive the judgment and become the germ of the ideal people of God (*v.* 13). This last idea of the "Remnant," which is one of the most distinctive in Isaiah's teaching, was perhaps also the first to receive public expression; for it is embodied in the name of a son, *Shěār-Ḥāshûb* (= "Remnant shall turn,") who must have been born to the prophet very soon after his inaugural vision (see *ch.* vii. 3). The application of that and other principles in different situations will appear as we proceed to describe the various aspects of Isaiah's public work.

It is convenient to distinguish three periods of Isaiah's ministry, which, although very unequal in length, are marked each by some features peculiar to itself. i. The first period extends from the death of Uzziah to the beginning of the reign of Ahaz. ii. The second is the critical period of the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion, about 735. iii. The third is the time of the Assyrian domination, culminating in the invasion and deliverance of the year 701¹.

i. The discourses commonly assigned to the first period are found in *chs.* ii.—iv., v. 1—24, ix. 8—x. 4 + v. 25—30. If to these passages we add *ch.* i. (which, although certainly not written *before* the Syro-Ephraimitic war, may not improbably be assigned to that date, and may then be regarded as a final manifesto summing up the results of the first period of his work) we have a well-defined group of prophecies, with a general resemblance to the book of Amos and presenting a vivid picture of the earliest phase of Isaiah's ministry. Like Amos, the prophet appears here mainly as a preacher of national righteousness and of judgment to come. The two great themes which are the burden of his message are the sin of Israel and the certainty of national disaster through the agency of the Assyrians. It has been disputed which of these two intuitions was primary and which was secondary in the consciousness of the prophets; that is to say, whether it was their profound sense of national sin that led them to the conviction that a great judgment was inevitable, or whether their intuitive certainty of what was portended by the approach of Assyria opened their

¹ Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 214, 422 (2nd Ed.).

eyes to the evidences of national corruption around them. The question, so formulated, hardly admits of an answer. What is peculiar to the prophets is the idea of God and of the moral order of the universe which enabled them to see the connexion between two sets of facts which to the prevalent religion of the time stood in no relation to one another. Knowing Jehovah as the absolutely Righteous One and the omnipotent Disposer of events they recognised His voice of anger in the thundering march of the Assyrians, and what they heard confirmed the verdict of their conscience on the moral condition of their people. In this respect Isaiah simply represents the attitude common to the prophets of the Assyrian period, and the two lines of thought which have been indicated are developed with equal power and earnestness in his earliest writings.

We have already seen that the social state of Judah was very similar to that of North Israel in the days of Amos, and Isaiah deals with the evils of the age in the spirit of his predecessor. If we may trust a probable arrangement of the discourses his criticism becomes more incisive and discriminating as time goes on. At first (in ch. ii.) his attention is directed to the outstanding evidences of ungodliness and worldly pride in the still prosperous country of Judah. Idolatry, superstition, trust in wealth and warlike resources—these familiar features of the nation's life are to the vision of the prophet purified by contact with the Holy One of Israel, so many symptoms of the irreligious spirit of his contemporaries. Somewhat later (ch. iii.) he touches on social evils, the oppression and injustice practised by the rich and powerful on the poor (*vv.* 9, 14, 15), and the luxurious fashions of the women of Jerusalem (*vv.* 16 ff.). In a still later prophecy (ch. v. 8—24) he comes to close quarters with the sins of action and of thought characteristic of the upper class, denouncing in a series of "woes" their violations of the rights of property in the lawless extension of landed estates (8—10), their drinking festivities (11, 12, 22), their unjust judgments (23), and (coming to more spiritual sins) their heedlessness of Jehovah's working (12), mocking and defiant scepticism (19), and perversion of moral distinctions (20). In ch. i. we find an additional

echo of Amos in the exposure of the prevalent delusion that Jehovah could be propitiated by costly and elaborate ritual service without regard to the character and conduct of the worshippers (*vv.* 10—17). The corrective to this religious error is given in the parable of the vineyard (*ch.* v. 1—7, *cf.* iii. 14), which expresses the fundamental prophetic doctrine that Jehovah “looks for judgment...and righteousness” in the nation which He has chosen for His own. There is perhaps one respect in which Isaiah’s treatment of national sins is more profound than that of Amos: he appears to trace all the manifestations of national corruption to a single source in the absence of a religious spirit, or the knowledge of God, in the men of his time. Here again we can perceive the influence of the vivid impression of the glory of God which he himself experienced at the moment of his call.

The descriptions of the coming judgment that occur in this cycle of prophecies exhibit all the qualities of Isaiah’s powerful and versatile genius. His very earliest recorded utterance contains a sublime vision of the “day of Jehovah,” as a day of earthquake and thunder, when “all that is proud and lofty” in nature or human civilisation shall be humbled before the glory of Jehovah’s majesty (*ch.* ii. 12 ff.). Again he pictures Jehovah as appearing in person to judge the rulers of his people (*iii.* 14), or he sees Him standing with outstretched hand to smite the sinful kingdom of the North (*ix.* 12, 17 etc.). But Isaiah’s strong sense of historic reality leads him to throw out more realistic descriptions of the judgment than these. Thus in *ch.* iii. 1—7 he conceives it as taking the shape of a period of revolutionary anarchy in the Judæan state, such as he had already witnessed in Ephraim (*ix.* 14 ff.). And although he does not yet mention the Assyrians by name, it is plain from v. 26—30 that he has them in view as the human instruments of Jehovah’s vengeance on Israel.

The eschatological element of Isaiah’s teaching, however, is as yet simple and undeveloped, although clearly present. He looks for a purification of the state from its base and worthless elements and a restoration of the best times of the old monarchy

(i. 24—26). The doctrine of the remnant is referred to in i. 27, as well as in the name of the prophet's son Shear-Jashub. Of the ideal age beyond the judgment we have two pictures in ii. 2—4 and iv. 2—6, although it is not quite certain that either of these passages belongs to Isaiah's spoken message of this period.

ii. (See chs. xvii. 1—11, vii., viii.; perhaps also ix. 1—7.) The second phase of Isaiah's ministry exhibits him in an entirely new character, that, namely, of a political adviser. In order to appreciate the importance of this fact we have only to look at the contrast which in this respect he presents to Amos and Hosea in the North. These prophets held the same fundamental convictions as Isaiah; they looked forward to a blessed future for Israel after the work of judgment was completed; yet their writings contain no hint of political direction for the leaders of the state. They take up a negative attitude towards the problems of statesmanship; and it must have seemed that the breach between Jehovah and His people was so absolute that no guidance or counsel could be obtained through the medium of the prophetic word. Now it is one of Isaiah's chief distinctions that he revived this political function of prophecy which had been in abeyance since the time of Elisha. Without descending from the high spiritual level to which prophecy had been raised by the work of Amos and Hosea, he was able from that standpoint to formulate a definite religious policy by which the nation might be safely guided through the dangers that lay immediately before it.

The fundamental maxims of Isaiah's statesmanship come first to light in the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion, in the memorable interview with Ahaz, recorded in ch. vii. The prophet had already announced (in ch. xvii. 1—11) the issue of the ill-fated alliance between Syria and Ephraim. By its unbrotherly attack on Judah (see ch. ix. 21) the Northern Kingdom had but sealed its own doom; and both it and Syria must speedily fall a prey to the advancing Assyrians. He knew also that a brief respite would be granted to Judah; and it was with the view of securing that this interval should be taken advantage

of in the highest interests of the nation that he sought, under divine direction, a personal meeting with the king. His main concern was to dissuade Ahaz from seeking to save himself from a passing danger by placing himself under the protection of Assyria. He represented the trivial nature of the momentary peril; and urged the king with all the weight of his inspired authority to adopt an attitude of wise passivity, renouncing all trust in earthly help and dubious political expedients, and relying on Jehovah alone to bring a good result out of the present crisis. How eager he was to bring the king round to a right mind he shewed by the offer of a miraculous sign in confirmation of his right to speak in the name of Jehovah. But it was all in vain. Ahaz had probably already taken his own line, and he refused to be turned aside by the fervid appeal of the prophet.

Isaiah, however, did not accept the decision of Ahaz as the final response of the nation to his message. From the court he appealed to the people at large, in the series of oracles contained in ch. viii., extending probably over a period of many months. By two symbolic acts he endeavoured to fix indelibly in the public mind the central fact on which his reading of the political situation hinged, viz., the speedy destruction of Syria and Ephraim by the king of Assyria. For this purpose he first caused a placard to be affixed, with legal formalities, in a conspicuous position, bearing the inscription "To Maher-shalal-hash-baz" (viii. 1, 2). Then some months afterwards he gave the interpretation of the motto, in connexion with the birth of a son, in whose name, as his manner was, he embodied the idea which at the time was of paramount importance in his work. "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and, My mother, the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria" (ix. 3, 4). But neither amongst the people did he find any general acceptance of his message. On every hand he was confronted by evidences of religious insensibility and confirmed unbelief. It was his first experience on a large scale of the truth revealed to him in his inaugural vision, that the effect of

his mission would be to produce judicial blindness and hardness of heart in those whom he addressed. The prophet recognised that his generation had passed through a spiritual ordeal from which it emerged with a gloomier destiny and a more certain looking for of judgment than under better auspices might have awaited it. It would seem that as he stood there before the unworthy representative of the house of David, thrown back on the inward inspiration which guided him, the prophet saw the whole vista of the future suddenly unfolded before his vision in darker colours, but in clearer outline than it had ever yet assumed. The sign which Ahaz did not dare to ask would be given in spite of his refusal (vii. 14); a child should be born whose name, Immanuel, "God with us," should be the earnest of deliverance from the attack of the allied kings (*v.* 16). But this happy event does not now close the outlook. Beyond that deliverance stretches the dreary prospect of a land ravaged by Assyrian and Egyptian armies, of the cessation of agriculture for an indefinite period, and a poor and scanty population reduced to the bare necessities of life (vii. 18—25; cf. viii. 7, 8). In this time of distress the child Immanuel is to grow up, sharing the poverty and humiliation of his people (vii. 15); and the full significance of his name will only be revealed in that glorious future which here, as always, forms the limit of Isaiah's prophetic horizon (ix. 1—7. See below, p. lviii f.).

Such appear to be the main outlines of the forecast of coming events which Isaiah published at the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic war. That it was remarkably verified in the subsequent history of Judah is familiar to all readers of the Old Testament. It is true that the picture contains some minor features which were not exactly fulfilled. Probably none of the events foretold took place quite so soon as Isaiah had anticipated. The overthrow of Damascus took place in 732, that of Samaria ten years later. So again the Assyrian invasion of Judah did not happen within at most 10 or 12 years, as Isaiah appears to have expected, but was postponed for more than a generation. The land of Judah was not the theatre of the contest between Egypt and Assyria for the mastery of Asia, as is assumed in vii. 18, 19.

But these are matters of detail which do not affect the substantial truth of the prediction, and they are modified in later utterances of Isaiah. The broad fact remains that Isaiah's public attitude at this time was based on a foreknowledge of the course of events which could not have been reached by any estimate of political probabilities. The immediate danger proved to be as trivial and evanescent as he persistently declared it to be, while the fatal results of the course chosen by Ahaz, though deferred for a time, were experienced in the disasters of Sennacherib's invasion.

We have yet to notice the significant incident which closes this chapter of the prophet's history (viii. 16—18). The rejection of his message by the people seems to have led to a temporary cessation of his public activity; and he marks his sense of the importance of the event by a singular action, which is described as "binding up the testimony and sealing the instruction among his disciples." The expressions no doubt are somewhat obscure; but the most natural supposition is that they refer to a written record of the prophecies delivered during the late crisis, which Isaiah solemnly sealed in presence of his "disciples," as a protest against the unbelief of the nation. Jehovah now "hideth his face from the house of Israel," i.e. he withdraws the guidance of the prophetic word which had been so coldly received. It remains for the prophet, and those who share his faith, to wait for the fulfilment of his word, and he appears by this act to separate himself and his adherents from the mass of their contemporaries and to form a new circle of religious fellowship based on faith in the revelation which Jehovah had given through himself. It is certain at any rate that at this time of general unbelief there was a band of men who were known as "disciples" of Isaiah; and it may well be that the fact so vaguely indicated, represents the most influential phase of his activity. The history of religions shews that the most enduring of all spiritual influences are those communicated through the close fellowship of a great personality with a limited number of susceptible minds, or in short through the relation of master and disciples. It would be no surprise to find this principle

exemplified in the career of Isaiah. It is but the practical development of his fundamental conception of a spiritual kernel within the nation; the "remnant" that should "return" was being formed under his eyes in the persons of the men who at this time began to detach themselves from an untoward generation and gather round him for inspiration and instruction.

iii. The silence of Isaiah does not seem to have been broken by any public pronouncement during the remainder of the reign of Ahaz. In a short oracle assigned by its title to the year of that king's death (ch. xiv. 29—32), he appears to speak as one who has an acknowledged position of authority in the direction of affairs of state; and such a change in the prophet's relations to the court would be naturally explained by the accession of Hezekiah. If we accept the view that Hezekiah succeeded to the throne in 727 this prophecy would signalise Isaiah's return to power after about six or seven years of retirement under the government of Ahaz. It is true that the genuineness of the title, and indeed of the prophecy itself, are widely disputed; but there does not seem to be any real difficulty in supposing that Isaiah uttered such an oracle at this time. In any case the accession of Hezekiah, a ruler of a very different stamp from his father, must have presented a new opening for the furtherance of Isaiah's public aims, of which we may be sure he would not fail to take advantage.

In the early part of this reign, he found an unexpected ally in the person of Micah of Moresheth Gath, whose work dates from the years immediately preceding the fall of the Northern Kingdom (cf. Mic. i. 6 with Jer. xxvi. 18). That the work of Micah made a profound impression on his contemporaries is seen from the remarkable incident related in Jer. xxvi. 17—19. We learn from that passage that the point which excited most attention in Micah's teaching was his definite prediction of the utter destruction of the capital and its sanctuary for the sins of the nobles who "built up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity" (ch. iii. 10—12). This is a thought which probably found no echo in the message of Isaiah at this time (see below, p. lxii); although it must have been familiar to

those who remembered his earlier prophecies. But whilst in this one respect Micah represents a somewhat different point of view from Isaiah's, in all essential matters the two prophets exhibit the most complete agreement. The picture of the state of Judah presented by the book of Isaiah is confirmed in almost every particular by the writings of Micah; and the coincidence proves that no amelioration of the condition of the common people had taken place since Isaiah first appeared as a prophet. Micah, indeed, depicts the wrongs of the peasantry with a vehement indignation natural in one who lived at a distance from the capital and in all probability belonged himself to the class which suffered most severely from the corruption and injustice which reigned in Jerusalem. It cannot be said that Isaiah deals less severely with these evils, but his political interests were wider than Micah's, and he never lost sight of the importance of good government and the necessity for social distinctions within the community. Hence while Micah contemplates simply a sweeping away of the intolerable system of government under which he lived, Isaiah steadily looks forward to a reformation of the aristocracy as a primary condition of the welfare of the state. Yet Isaiah must have eagerly welcomed the response which his teaching met from the common people as represented by a kindred spirit like Micah. It must have strengthened his hopes for a better time when all classes of the nation would cooperate in the promotion of the highest interests of morality and religion; when the demand for righteousness which rose from the ranks of the commonalty would be answered by "a king reigning in righteousness and princes ruling in judgment" (xxxii. 1).

In the sphere of politics Isaiah consistently upheld the maxim that the safety of the state lay in abstinence from all attempts to recover its independence and in quiet resignation to the will of Jehovah. There is not the least reason to believe that the prophet ever entertained a hope that by following the course he recommended Judah might be spared the crowning disaster of an Assyrian invasion. That great act of judgment was irrevocably decreed by Jehovah, and could not

be finally averted by any line of policy however prudent or even religious it might be. Isaiah's purpose was simply to secure that *when* the judgment came its salutary effects might be experienced by as large a section of the nation as possible ; and with this ultimate object in view he counselled a patient acceptance of the irksome political situation in which Judah was placed, and above all an attitude of neutrality in the repeated struggles which were made by the surrounding nations against Assyria. This of course was on the surface a very different line of action from that which he urged on Ahaz in the year 735 ; but both were founded on the one fundamental principle by which Isaiah's statesmanship was governed. Then, he sought to prevent Ahaz from entering into an alliance with Tiglath-pileser, involving a dishonourable subjection to the Assyrian Empire. Now, under Hezekiah, he sets his face against all schemes for violating that compact by an alliance with Egypt or any other country opposed to Assyria. But the religious motive in both cases was his antipathy to the spirit of unbelief which he discovered in all attempts to effect political salvation by human wisdom and the help of heathen states. How jealously at this time he watched over the first manifestations of hostility towards Assyria, and how prompt he was to check them, is shewn by two prophecies belonging to the first half of Hezekiah's reign. One is the oracle on Philistia already referred to (ch. xiv. 29—32), in which he announces a terrible chastisement of the Philistine cities at the hands of the Assyrians, and stakes the safety of Israel on Jehovah's power and purpose to protect Mount Zion. The other (ch. xx.) is dated in the year of the Tartan's expedition against Ashdod (711), and contains a still more emphatic warning against the folly of trusting to Egypt for help. From the fact that Hezekiah had never as yet definitely committed himself to overt rebellion, we may judge that these warnings were not without effect. It is important to observe that down to the year 711 Isaiah anticipated a great extension of the Assyrian Empire before its power should be broken. The conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia (ch. xx.) was an event that could not come about in a day, and when the prophet

uttered that prediction he cannot have looked for an immediate termination to the proud and victorious career of Assyria. This fact has to be noticed because of a certain modification of Isaiah's outlook in the next great discourse to which our attention must be directed.

As the inevitable collision between Judah and the world-power drew near, Isaiah found it necessary to expound in a set discourse his inspired convictions with regard to the mission of Assyria and the limits assigned to it in the scheme of Jehovah's universal government. It was a theme which had never as yet been systematically handled from the point of view of prophecy. Both Amos and Hosea had recognised in Assyria the providential instrument of judgment on the sin of Israel, and had assumed that when its commission was executed it would in some way be removed and not be permitted to impede the development of Jehovah's gracious purposes towards His people. But neither of them was led to reflect on the enigma presented by Jehovah's use of a human instrument which scorned His authority and obeyed no law but its own savage lust of plunder and destruction. It was a problem, however, which could not fail to thrust itself on the mind of Isaiah, as he marked the unrelenting advance of Assyria towards universal dominion and became aware of the ruthless and impious spirit which animated the masters of those irresistible legions. How could an immoral force be used for moral ends? When and where and how would the Assyrian overstep the limits of his commission and appear in open conflict with the purpose of Him who raised him up? And when that point was reached, how would Jehovah rid Himself of the formidable tool which He had fashioned to execute His strange work on the earth? Such questions as these find their answer in ch. x. 5—34, one of the longest and most characteristic of Isaiah's utterances and perhaps the grandest exposition of the religious interpretation of history that ever was written¹. (See the Introductory Note to ch. x. 5—34.)

What is most distinctive in Isaiah's representation is that

¹ The passage is of uncertain date, but most probably belongs to the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib.

the final trespass of the Assyrian is conceived as taking the form of an assault on the inviolable seat of Jehovah's earthly government in Jerusalem. It is when he stands under the walls of the capital, "swinging his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion," (*v.* 32) that a destructive blow will be dealt to him: "the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, shall lop the boughs with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be humbled" (*v.* 33). Thus after Assyria has proved the impotence of all other gods by destroying in succession the peoples that served and trusted in them, the breaking of its power on the soil of Palestine will reveal to all the world the true divinity of Jehovah, and vindicate the truth that its whole enterprise had been controlled and guided to this issue by the Holy One of Israel. Never, perhaps, had a great religious idea been more boldly staked on the success of a definite historical prediction. But through all the troubles and excitement that filled the early years of Sennacherib's reign Isaiah never wavered in the assurance that his words would be verified by the event. The expectation of a great and speedy disaster to the Assyrian armies becomes one of the sustaining motives of his ministry, and he proclaims it with unhesitating confidence, not only to his own countrymen (as in *ch.* xiv. 24—27 and xvii. 12—14) but also to the ambassadors from Ethiopia who at this time visited Jerusalem (*ch.* xviii.).

This brings us to the important group of prophecies issued by Isaiah during and immediately before the invasion of Sennacherib (*ch.* xxviii.¹—xxxi. [*? xxxii f.*]; xxii.). It was a time of unprecedented activity on the part of the prophet, when nearly every leading principle of his ministry stands out with singular clearness and force. It is not easy, however, to form a consistent conception of his attitude and action during this crisis. Two main ideas cross each other throughout the discourses; on the one hand the necessity for a severe judgment on Jerusalem in which the city shall be reduced to the utmost distress and humiliation, and on the other hand the certainty that the

¹ The first six verses of *ch.* xxviii. must have been spoken before the destruction of Samaria, but they were probably republished at this time.

crisis will end in the destruction of Assyria and the introduction of a glorious era for the people of God. At times (especially in xxix. 4; xxxii. 13 f.; xxii. 1—14) the first thought is pushed so far as apparently to exclude the other, so that the prophet seems to speak with a double voice, now uttering unrelieved oracles of doom, and again consoling the people with visions of the brighter future. The manner in which the two ideas alternate—each prophecy of judgment passing into a captivating picture of the idyllic peace and felicity just about to break on the nation—also presents a literary problem of some difficulty. We cannot hope to explain these phenomena to our entire satisfaction, because the oracles would naturally be modified in the act of committing them to writing, and we do not know to what extent they correspond with Isaiah's spoken message at the time. Nevertheless one or two aspects of the situation are revealed with unmistakeable distinctness; and on these it will be best to concentrate our attention.

The most prominent feature of Isaiah's activity which appears in xxviii.—xxx., is his opposition to the project of rebellion in alliance with Egypt. This led him almost single-handed into a prolonged conflict with the leaders of the Egyptian party, whose influence was then in the ascendant at Hezekiah's court. Amongst these men a high official named Shebna (probably a foreigner) enjoys the distinction of being the only private individual who falls under the lash of Isaiah's invective (ch. xxii. 15 ff.). How great the prophet's political influence was is shewn by the anxiety of the conspirators to keep him in the dark with regard to the plot that was being hatched (xxix. 15; xxx. 1). In this they did not succeed; Isaiah's ceaseless vigilance unmasked their design, and he was able to follow the negotiations step by step with reiterated warnings. On one occasion we find him engaged in a heated altercation with the leaders of the war party, whom he had apparently surprised at a carousal held to celebrate what they called a "covenant with death and an agreement with the underworld" (xxviii. 8 ff.). More than once he satirises the craft and subtlety on which the conspirators prided themselves; and denounces the secrecy in which they screened

their proceedings as an attempt to outwit the Almighty (xxix. 15; xxx. 1—12; xxxi. 1, 2). A parting glimpse of the ill-fated enterprise is probably given in ch. xxx. 6, 7, where the prophet pictures the heavily laden caravan making its way across the desert with presents from Hezekiah to the potentates of the Nile Valley. Isaiah's protest was therefore unavailing. The intrigue of the nobles prevailed over the wiser counsels of the prophet; and for the second time in his life he seems to have retired from a bootless controversy with a solemn testimony against the infatuation which had seized the whole people. Once more, as in the days of Ahaz, he embodied the substance of his message in a permanent written record, that it might be a witness against the unbelief and rejection of the divine revelation which must surely end in national disaster (xxx. 8 ff.).

There is no doubt that for the moment the policy adopted by the court was popular with all classes of the community. The prospect of a war with Assyria was eagerly welcomed by the reckless patriotism of the common people; and the spirit of levity manifested by the capital at this time seemed to Isaiah not less irreligious than the carnal tendencies of the court. A certain air of mirth and gaiety appears at all times to have impressed him as characteristic of the population of Jerusalem,—the “jubilant city” as he twice names it (xxii. 2; xxxii. 13; cf. v. 14). Some of the gloomiest oracles belonging to this period were called forth by thoughtless exhibitions of this temper of mind which came under the prophet's observation. Looking on the merry throng that gathered in the temple court at one of the great annual festivals, he uttered the “Woe to Ariel” of ch. xxix. 1—4, in which he predicts the humiliation of the impenitent city within the space of one or two years. Another time it was the careless and scornful attitude of the women that moved him to deliver a very similar message of doom (xxxii. 9—14). But the worst display of this feeling seems to have occurred at the very moment when Isaiah looked for some token of penitential submission to the will of Jehovah. The difficult prophecy of ch. xxii. 1—14, which exceeds in severity any other in the whole book, refers most probably to what took place

when the first blockade of Jerusalem was raised in consequence of Hezekiah's surrender. That was emphatically a day on which "the Lord Jehovah of hosts called to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth" (*v.* 12). But instead of this, it was the occasion of a senseless outburst of mirth and festivity which astounded the prophet, and for the moment obliterated from his mind the vision of a happy future. Heedless of the late disasters, and the humiliating conditions of peace, the city kept holiday in honour of its deliverance, the house-tops were crowded with spectators watching the departure of the Assyrian army, and universal hilarity expressed the prevalent sentiment of the hour, "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die" (*v.* 13). Isaiah was at first moved to tears by such a revelation of the incorrigible hardness of the people under Jehovah's chastisements (*v.* 4), but at length sorrow gives way to righteous indignation and in his inner ear there sounded, like a knell, the awful sentence of rejection, "Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts" (*v.* 14).

It may fairly be inferred from these three prophecies that Isaiah entertained no expectation of salvation for the mass of his countrymen, and that he was saved from absolute pessimism only by his unquenchable faith in an elect "remnant" and by the hopes that sprang from that conviction. There is no section of his writings where these hopes find grander or clearer expression than the discourses of Sennacherib's reign. The prophet felt that the hour of the decisive conflict between Jehovah and the world-power was at hand; and he knew that in the last extremity Jerusalem would be protected by the direct intervention of the Almighty (*xxix.* 7, 8; *xxxi.* 5). This thought is most powerfully expressed in an imaginative picture of the judgment on Assyria contained in *ch.* *xxx.* 27—33 (*cf.* *xxxi.* 8, 9). The crisis of Jerusalem's fate becomes the occasion of that final revelation of the majesty of God to which Isaiah had looked forward from the beginning of his work, and which he had with increasing distinctness connected with the overthrow of the Assyrian power. The whole history of redemption converges to this one event; it is

the consummation of Jehovah's work of judgment on both Israel and Assyria, and the inauguration of the reign of holiness and peace reserved for the purified remnant of the nation. Hence it is that the threats of judgment which the prophet was constrained by the perverseness of the people to utter are constantly relieved by ideal pictures of salvation in which he found a refuge from the discouragements and confusions of the present. It is possible that these passages may have been addressed in the first instance to his own disciples rather than to the people at large; at all events they shew how firmly he held to the belief that out of the immediate trial there would emerge a regenerate nation to enjoy the temporal and spiritual blessings of the Messianic age (xxix. 17—24; xxx. 18—26; xxxii. 1—8).

We have now traced Isaiah's activity to the close of the first attack of Sennacherib on Jerusalem, and we have seen that up to that moment nothing had occurred to modify his stern verdict on the disposition of the inhabitants. For what follows we are almost entirely dependent on the historical appendix of the book (ch. xxxvi., xxxvii.) and the prophecies imbedded there. We are at once struck by the change that has passed over the prophet's attitude in the short interval. The note of rebuke and menace which was so prominent during the first stages of the invasion has wholly disappeared from his teaching; his tone is one of serene confidence and his message is an unconditional assurance of the collapse of the Assyrian enterprise. It is not so difficult as it might appear to account for this sudden alteration in the prophet's demeanour. The renewal of the demand for the surrender of Jerusalem had a most salutary effect on the disposition of Hezekiah, and no doubt on the court and the populace as well. The king recognised the hopeless plight in which his adventurous policy had landed him, and, thoroughly humbled, throws himself unreservedly on the protection of Jehovah and the guidance of His prophet. On the other hand the perfidious conduct of Sennacherib, and his blasphemous defiance of the God of Israel, had put him in the wrong; he had committed the crowning offence against the majesty of Jehovah which Isaiah had long foreseen. He felt

therefore that the time of Judah's chastisement was past, and that of Sennacherib's downfall had arrived. All that remained for him to do was to sustain the faith and courage of Hezekiah with the assurance that Jehovah was with him in his refusal to submit to the demands of Sennacherib. It is not necessary here to follow the details of the narrative. What is most remarkable in the oracles of this time is the sobriety of the prediction on which Isaiah based his encouragement to resistance. He drops no hint of the frightful catastrophe which was to break the power of Assyria in that region for a whole generation. He simply announces that the Assyrian shall "hear a rumour and return to his own land," there to perish by the sword (xxxvii. 7), that "by the way that he came by the same he shall return," without having so much as "shot an arrow" against Jerusalem (*viz.* 29, 33, 34 f.). All this of course was strictly fulfilled, and would of itself form a complete vindication of Isaiah's authority to speak in the name of his God. But the sudden and terrible calamity which overwhelmed the army of Sennacherib answered in some degree to the most dramatic of his earlier prophecies (x. 33 f.; xvii. 12 ff.; xviii. 3 ff.; xxx. 27 ff.) and proved that all through his career Isaiah had been inspired with a true foreknowledge which no calculation of probabilities could have attained.

The comparative moderation of Isaiah's last utterances must not lead us to underestimate the heroism of faith which enabled him to stand out at this juncture as the saviour of his country. The political risks of the course he advocated were indeed tremendous; for a renewed declaration of war against Assyria must have seemed to all human sagacity a perfectly desperate policy. But far more momentous were the religious issues at stake. If Jerusalem had then been surrendered or captured, all that had been gained by the work of Isaiah and other prophets would have been lost to Israel and to the world. The spiritual religion which lay in germ in the teaching of Isaiah was not as yet capable of existing apart from the nationality in which it had been born, and hence the preservation of the Hebrew state was of paramount importance for the conser-

vation of the true knowledge of God. Yet with all this in view Isaiah never wavered. While all around him were paralysed with fear, his confidence remained unshaken, and in the supreme hour of danger he boldly announced that the city would be saved and the word of the Lord established. His success in this last emergency, after so many defeats at the hands of an unbelieving nation and its rulers, was an event which has had "more influence on the life of subsequent generations than all the conquests of Assyrian kings; for it assured the permanent vitality of that religion which was the cradle of Christianity¹."

The remainder of Isaiah's life is wrapped in obscurity. How long he survived the deliverance, how his last years were occupied, in what spirit he faced the problems of a new century, we cannot tell. It is an attractive conjecture of Duhm that his most soaring pictures of the Messiah's kingdom (ii. 1—4; xi. 1—8; xxxii. 1—6) come from his latest years, when the aged prophet, after a life spent in labour and conflict, turned with rapture to that ideal future which in spite of all delays and disappointments must surely be realised. It is an attractive idea, but nothing more. A Jewish tradition current in the 2nd century A.D. asserts that he outlived Hezekiah and perished in the heathen reaction under Manasseh; but this also, though not inherently incredible, is destitute of historical value. This is a case in which the silence of scripture is as instructive as its speech. For it reminds us that Isaiah's life work really ended with the events of 701. It was enough for one man to have guided the policy of his country through its first eventful collision with the world power, which in its own ruthless fashion was preparing the way for a new civilisation; to have enunciated the principles of the moral government of the universe that made monotheism a practical power in history; to have enriched eschatology with the figure of the ideal King of God's kingdom; to have formed within the Jewish state a prophetic party in which the religion of the spirit eventually detached itself from its national environment; and to have left behind him an

¹ Robertson Smith, *Prophets*, p. 356.

illustrious example of that faith in the unseen and eternal without which humanity cannot reach the goal appointed for it in the redemptive purpose of God.

CHAPTER III.

ISAIAH'S PROPHETIC CONCEPTIONS.

THE ruling ideas of Isaiah's ministry are not materially different from those of the other great prophets of the same period, Amos, Hosea and Micah. All these writers are animated by the same fundamental convictions with regard to the nature and character of Jehovah the God of Israel, His controversy with His people, the necessity of a national judgment to be inflicted through the agency of Assyria, and the final establishment of Jehovah's kingdom of righteousness and peace. But to this common body of prophetic doctrine each prophet contributes something that is distinctive, according as the bent of his genius or his peculiar experience led him to develop certain aspects of truth specially revealed to him. In the case of Isaiah we shall see that from the beginning his message contained some elements not to be found in the writings of his contemporaries; while other distinctive conceptions emerge in the course of his active ministry. Being preeminently a man of action and a statesman, his firm grasp of political facts imparts a special direction to his thoughts of the divine kingdom; and the necessity of presenting a definite religious policy to the rulers of the state gives a precision and fulness to his forecasts of the future in which he is hardly equalled by any other prophet. At the same time there is an organic unity in his teaching, all his leading ideas being implicitly contained in a few simple but comprehensive principles disclosed to him in his inaugural vision. They may be arranged under three heads: first, those more immediately connected with the prophet's conception of

God; second, his view of Israel; and third, the Messianic hope in its different aspects.

I. JEHOVAH AND HIS WORK.

Isaiah is a monotheist in the strictest sense of the term. There is no sentence in his writings which suggests that he attributed any sort of real existence to the false gods of the heathen; and if he never reasons on the subject of the divine unity, it is because the fact was too fundamental in his mind to admit of demonstration. He frequently speaks of idols as "the work of men's hands" (ii. 8, 20; xvii. 8; xxxi. 7); his favourite designation for them is *'ēlîlîm* ("not-gods" or "nonentities") a word which he seems himself to have coined to express his sense of their unreality. No language could be more opposed to the spirit of idolatry than this; for it expressly denies the belief which is at the foundation of the worship of idols, namely, that the image is the abode of a supernatural being able to protect and help his votaries. Nor are the prophet's allusions to the primitive nature-worship which survived in the land (i. 29, 30; xvii. 10, 11) less intolerant, or less decisive as to his attitude towards the polytheistic tendencies of his countrymen. For him, in short, there was but one divine Being; and all his conceptions of Godhead are summed up in the revelation which made him a prophet, the vision of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel (ch. vi.).

It has been already remarked (p. xxiv) that the aspect of the divine nature chiefly expressed by this vision is that of overwhelming and awe-inspiring majesty. The effect produced on the mind by Isaiah's magnificent description is far more impressive and convincing on this point than any analysis of the contents of the vision can be. But if we must analyse, we cannot fail to observe how every touch in the picture emphasises the general conception of Jehovah as a transcendently glorious Being, in whose awful presence no unconsecrated mortal can stand. The throne "high and lofty" on which He sits indicates that He is a King, and not the King of Israel alone, but the absolute, universal Sovereign, (*ādôn*) whose glory is the fulness of

the whole earth. The fiery creatures, the Seraphs, who are the ministers of His court, and who reflect something of His ineffable glory, nevertheless veil themselves before Him in the consciousness of their imperfection, while the hymn of praise that continually ascends from their lips expresses their sense of His adorable and incomparable majesty. Further, the fear of death which overtakes the prophet as he gazes unbidden on this solemn mystery, as well as the symbol of his expiation, which is by contact with the fire in which Jehovah dwells, and also the sternness of the divine message to Israel, all contribute to the impression which this scene conveys of Jehovah's unapproachable majesty.

The chant of the seraphs contains two words which may be said to sum up the import of the vision in so far as it is a revelation of God. Of these the first is the word *holy*, expressing what Jehovah is in Himself; while the second—*glory*—appears to denote an aspect of His Godhead which is reflected in the works of nature.

In order to understand the significance of the term "holiness" (*qōdesh*) in Isaiah's conception of God, we have to start from a much lower level of religious thinking than that which is represented by his teaching. The word is not confined to the religion of Israel, but was used throughout Semitic antiquity as the most comprehensive predicate of deity, although the idea primarily expressed by it is somewhat uncertain. If, as many writers believe, it comes from a root signifying "separation" or "distance" it would embody the notion of the contrast between the divine and the human which was perhaps characteristic of the conception of God common to the Semitic peoples. It is certain at all events that "holiness" does not express any special attribute of the divine nature but rather the general notion of godhead, as distinguished from every other form of existence. Such a phrase, for example, as "the holy gods," which occurs in the inscription of Eshmunazar king of Sidon, as well as in Dan. iv. 8, 9, 18, v. 11, is a mere redundancy of speech, gratifying the reverential feeling of the speakers, but conveying no information as to the character of the gods. Least of all did the term connote ethical

purity ; for the deities to whom it was applied by the heathen Semites were not only immoral from our point of view, but were not even regarded as moral beings by their own worshippers¹.

Now the writings of the Hebrew prophets, and of Isaiah in particular, mark an important stage in the development of this notion of holiness. At first sight it might seem inexplicable that a purely formal idea, expressing no positive conception beyond that of awe-inspiring power and majesty, should become a central doctrine of the prophetic theology. But in truth it is the very vagueness and comprehensiveness of the term which explains the profound significance attaching to it in the mind of Isaiah. By taking this word, which by universal consent embraced all that was distinctive of deity, *and restricting it to Jehovah*, he expressed the fundamental truth that in the God of Israel and in Him alone are concentrated all the attributes of true divinity². Holiness thus ceases to be an abstract quality shared by a number of divine beings ; it comes to denote the fulness of what Jehovah is as He is known from His revelation of Himself to the consciousness of the prophet. It signalises the most notable fact in the religious history of Israel, the formation of an idea of God which at once placed an impassable gulf between Jehovah and all other beings who claimed the title of divine ; and it is this positive idea of God, expressed in the doctrine of Jehovah's unique holiness, that is the mainstay of Isaiah's ministry.

From this point of view it is immaterial to determine how much or how little of permanent religious truth may have been contained in the primitive notion of holiness, which prevailed in

¹ With the secondary applications of the word to places, persons and things we are not here concerned ; but the fact that the Hierodouloi, or sacred prostitutes, of the Canaanite religion were known as "holy women" furnishes decisive evidence of the complete divorce in ancient times of the two ideas of holiness and morality.

² No attempt is here made to discriminate between what is peculiar to Isaiah and what is common to him and other prophets. It is not implied that he was the only, or the first, writer who made this application of the word "holy."

the Semitic world. It is probable that the word universally conveyed impressions of the awful might of the Godhead such as are reflected in Isaiah's vision, just as the prophet's presentiment of death may be akin to the popular belief that the direct sight of God bodes destruction to mortals (Jud. xiii. 22, &c.). This at any rate is an element in Isaiah's idea of God and is therefore included under the word "holiness." But a term which embraces every distinctive attribute of deity must necessarily expand and deepen with every advance in the true knowledge of God. Hence we might expect that under the influence of Revelation the idea would be filled with ethical contents, and would denote the moral perfectness which belongs to the character of Jehovah. That this is included in Isaiah's use of the word appears clearly from the sense of sin which the vision of God awakened within him. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." This consciousness of moral defect cleaving to him answers to the conception of Jehovah as a Being of spotless purity, separated not only from nature, but from all that is imperfect and sinful—One who is "of too pure eyes to behold evil" (Hab. i. 13). Thus in Isaiah's hands the word "holy" becomes a complete expression for the doctrine of God which is maintained by the prophets. It denotes first, the natural attributes of power and majesty which are inseparable from the thought of Deity; second, the ethical character and perfection of the God of Revelation; while finally by being restricted in its application to Jehovah it asserts His exclusive right to the adoration and homage not merely of His own people but of all His rational creatures.

The second word, "glory" (*kābôd*) is used in the Old Testament in a variety of senses. It is certainly less comprehensive than "holy," and is perhaps hardly to be considered a strictly theological term. Nevertheless its use in the Trisagion suggests a striking aspect of Isaiah's conception of the relation of God to the universe. In nearly all cases "glory" means the external manifestation of power or greatness, whether of a king (Isa. viii. 7; Ps. xxiv. 7 ff.) or a nation (Isa. xvii. 3, 4; Mic. i. 15) or an individual (Gen. xxxi. 1;

Job xxix. 20), or humanity as such (Ps. viii. 5)¹. The glory of God is spoken of chiefly in two senses; first, of the honour and praise due to Him from men (or angels) (Mal. i. 6); and second, of the dazzling brightness in which he arrays Himself when He supernaturally manifests His presence on earth (Ez. iii. 23, &c.; Ex. xvi. 10, &c.). Neither of these meanings, however, quite suits the use of the term in the second line of the Seraphs' hymn, which literally translated reads "the filling of the whole earth is His glory." Obviously "glory" is here something objective, as distinct from the glory ascribed to God in the praises of His creatures; while it is at the same time something "far more deeply interfused" with nature than the supernatural phenomena of the cloud of fire and light. The general idea must be that all which the world contains, all that is sublime and powerful in nature, is the outward expression and symbol of the majesty which belongs to Him as the God of all the earth.

This leads us to consider an important development of the doctrine of Jehovah's universal sovereignty which is conspicuous in the writings of Isaiah; namely, the idea of a "work" or "plan" which is the revelation of Jehovah in history. In the vision the Great King is represented as deliberating with Himself on the interests of His Kingdom, and calling for a messenger to represent Him on earth. Isaiah's mind was thus directly led to the thought of a divine purpose which is being progressively realised in the providential government of the world. The thought was evidently one that laid a deep hold upon him (see ch. v. 12; x. 12, 23; xiv. 24, 26 f.; [xxii. 11] xxviii. 21 f.). By the "work" of Jehovah he means chiefly, indeed, (though, as we shall see, not exclusively), the great consummation of history towards which events were rapidly hastening. It is a "final and decisive work" which Jehovah is about to execute (x. 23; xxviii. 22). Its goal is the manifestation of His own Godhead, and the establishment of His Kingdom of righteousness on the earth. This is effected in the "day" of Jehovah, which appears to be conceived from the first as a day of universal

¹ Etymologically, the word comes from a root signifying "heaviness"; hence that which is *impressive* as a display of power or dignity.

judgment, in which all human pride will be humbled, and men will fling their idols to the moles and the bats and hide themselves from "the glory of His majesty when He arises to terrify the earth" (ii. 17, 19 ff.). Later on, the idea assumes a more definite shape in the announcement of a contest between Jehovah and the power of this world as concentrated in the Assyrian empire. Jehovah quietly looks on in His dwelling-place (xviii. 4) until the moment for action has arrived, and then suddenly His anger explodes against His enemies and consumes them. But this is not all that Isaiah means by the "work" of God. Not only in the supreme crisis of history but in the stirring political changes of his time the prophet discerns the operation of Jehovah's hands. Not to perceive this divine working is one of the great faults with which he charges the irreligious leaders of his people (v. 12 ; xxii. 11). Just as Jehovah's glory fills the whole earth, though the eyes of men are blind to it, so His activity pervades all human history, although from the lips of unbelievers the prophet hears the shallow scoff : "let Him hasten His work that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh that we may know it" (v. 19). It is this conception of a continuous work of Jehovah in His Providence that enables Isaiah to bring the idea of God into such close contact with the events of his time, and makes the doctrine of the universal divine Sovereignty so living and practical a principle of his ministry. History is to him a drama rapidly approaching its *denouement*, and in the great convulsions which were shaking the foundations of the political world he hears the footsteps of the Almighty marching onwards to a day of crisis and final hope for humanity. And thus Jehovah "reigns supreme alike in the realm of nature, and the sphere of human history ; and the crash of kingdoms, the total dissolution of the old order of the Hebrew world, which accompanied the advance of Assyria, is to the prophet nothing else than the crowning proof of Jehovah's absolute dominion, asserting itself in the abasement of all that disputes His supremacy¹."

¹ Robertson Smith, *Prophets*, p. 226.

Such appear to be the leading elements in Isaiah's conception of God. Special applications of them will meet us when we come to consider the relations between Jehovah and Israel. Other attributes than those mentioned are of course frequently referred to, for example, wisdom (xxviii. 29; xxxi. 2), jealousy or zeal (ix. 7), anger and the like. Judicial righteousness is directly connected with the idea of holiness in the remarkable sentence: "the holy God shall sanctify Himself (i.e. shew Himself holy) in righteousness" (v. 16). But all such attributes are included in the personal, anthropomorphic idea of God which Isaiah shares with all the Old Testament writers. In spite of the infinite distance between God and man, expressed by the term holiness, it still remains true that the divine image in man is the basis of all religious relations between God and man, and that Jehovah cannot be rightly conceived, except as endowed with the attributes and even the emotions of moral personality. It is to be remarked, however, as characteristic of Isaiah that the sterner aspects of the divine character are those almost exclusively insisted upon. He never speaks of "love" or "kindness" as attributes of Jehovah. There is indeed a purpose of grace underlying all His dealings with men, and the thought is expressed that the Lord "waits" till He can have compassion on the people (xxx. 18). But Jehovah's message through Isaiah contains no note of yearning affection like that which melted the tender heart of Hosea. We search his writings in vain for such pathetic images as the husband seeking with pure and unselfish love to reclaim the unfaithful wife from a life of shame and misery, or the father teaching his child to walk, holding it by its arms. To the strong nature of Isaiah, God reveals Himself as the absolute Sovereign, of an infinite majesty; and when He speaks through him to men it is always in accents of regal authority.

II. JEHOVAH AND ISRAEL.

Like all the prophets, Isaiah bases his message to his countrymen on the conception of a unique relation between Jehovah and the nation of Israel. In virtue of this relation Jehovah is

Israel's God, and Israel is Jehovah's people. These propositions express the two sides of what may be called the religious consciousness of the nation; and the prophets, although they may have given them an interpretation not understood by the bulk of their contemporaries, nevertheless assert the principle that Israel stands in a peculiar relation to Jehovah, and that in a special sense Jehovah is the God of Israel. And here we come upon a fact of primary importance in the prophetic view of religion, although it is one which it is difficult to state briefly in its full significance without one-sided exaggeration. Religion, as taught by the prophets, is not a matter between God and the individual soul, but between God and the nation. Israel is invariably conceived by them as a national unity, and frequently figured as a moral person, and it is this unity, embodied in the organisation of the state, which is the religious subject. Individual Israelites are, as a matter of course, bound to acknowledge and honour Jehovah in their conduct; but in all directly religious acts they appear as members of the nation; and all their relationships to God are determined by the fact that in their several spheres of life they belong to the community which is the immediate object of Jehovah's regard. This is a truth which has to be constantly borne in mind in reading the prophets; the love or faith or obedience they require are faith and love and obedience on the part of the whole people in its corporate capacity, and the sins they denounce, though committed by individuals, are sins in which, in virtue of the principle of solidarity, the whole nation is implicated.

Isaiah's sense of this peculiar relation of Jehovah to Israel is inseparably bound up with his general conceptions of the divine nature. The thought of God as the universal Sovereign is specialised in the idea of His kingship over Israel, an idea whose influence makes itself felt in the whole of the prophet's activity. Israel is the immediate sphere of Jehovah's royal functions, and it is in His name that Isaiah claims an authoritative voice in the direction of the affairs of the state. He speaks to his countrymen as one who has "seen the King" and has been commissioned to declare His will as the supreme law of the nation.

Thus through the medium of the prophetic word the abstract doctrine of the divine sovereignty is translated into living and personal relations between Jehovah the King and Israel His kingdom. Similarly the supreme quality of holiness, or essential divinity, becomes a practical factor in religion through being brought to bear on Jehovah's relation to His people. He is, to use a favourite title of Isaiah's, "the Holy One of Israel¹," i.e. the Holy Being who is the God of Israel. Here again Israel is conceived as the community within which Jehovah reveals Himself as He truly is, and by which His character as the Holy One is to be recognised, and exhibited to the world. The whole of Isaiah's conception of national religion is summed up in the phrase to "sanctify the Lord of Hosts" (viii. 13, xxix. 23); that is, to acknowledge and worship His Godhead, and to cherish towards Him the sentiment of fear and reverence which was impressed on the prophet's own mind by the revelation of His holiness.

The prophet's judgment on the actual state of the nation is but the application of these principles to the religious and social problems of his time. The conviction of an irreconcilable breach between Jehovah and His people, which he shares with all the great pre-Exilic prophets, springs from his first personal contact with the awful holiness of Israel's God. The immediate effect of the vision was to produce a sense, not merely of his own uncleanness, but of the uncleanness of the whole actual life of the nation. He then realised what it was to "dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (vi. 5); and when he returned to his place among men, with a conscience purified and quickened by what he had experienced, he had to bear witness of his fellow-countrymen that "their tongue and their doings were against Jehovah to provoke the eyes of His glory" (iii. 8). His own lips had been purged by contact with the fire which is the emblem of the divine holiness; but at the same time he learned

¹ The phrase is almost limited to the book of Isaiah, forming one of the linguistic links between the two great divisions of the book. Elsewhere it occurs only in Ps. lxxi. 22, lxxviii. 41, lxxxix. 18; Jer. l. 29, li. 5; and, in a somewhat different form, in Ezek. xxxix. 7. There is little doubt, therefore, that it was first introduced by Isaiah.

that the only fire which could cleanse the unholy nation was the fire of judgment, which was to consume the base and worthless elements of the state till only the indestructible remnant, the holy seed, remained (vi. 13; cf. iv. 4 f.).

Thus the sense of Jehovah's holiness has its counterpart in the conviction of Israel's actual uncleanness, and it is important to observe how every article in Isaiah's indictment of the nation runs back to this fundamental antithesis. The prevalent idolatry was a direct and open denial of His Godhead, a degrading of Him to the level of the "nonentities" of the heathen Pantheon. Religion, as conceived and practised by the people, was not the heart-felt recognition of His holy character; the homage rendered to Him was purely formal, a "human tradition learned by rote" (xxix. 13), a profuse and elaborate sacrificial ritual (i. 10—17). The grinding tyranny of the upper classes, joined as it was with corrupt administration of justice, was an abuse of the sacred trust delegated by the Holy King to the "elders and princes of His people" (iii. 13—15). Israel, the vineyard of Jehovah, is ravaged by those whom He had appointed to be its keepers, and when He "looked for judgment, behold bloodshed; and for righteousness, behold a cry" (v. 7). The religious indifference, the scepticism, the luxury, the dissipation, of the statesmen and nobles, all proceed from the same root of insensibility to the claims of Jehovah's holiness, or the reality of His divinity; and their pride in horses and chariots, in fortifications and armies, in skilled diplomacy and strong coalitions reveals their utter unbelief in the spiritual Power which rules the universe. In all these features of society the prophet reads the symptoms of a deep-seated national ungodliness and apostasy, of a people in veiled rebellion against its true Sovereign. "They have forsaken Jehovah, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have apostatised and gone backward" (i. 4). They are children in ungrateful and unnatural revolt against their Father (i. 2, xxx. 9). The alienation between Israel and its God is complete; Israel has forsaken Jehovah, and Jehovah has rejected His people (ii. 6).

There is one remarkable fact in Isaiah's ministry that reveals a darker view of Israel's spiritual condition than was expressed by any of his predecessors. He entered on his work in the full consciousness that the effect of his mission would be to seal the doom of his people (vi. 9 ff.). To many modern writers such a perception has seemed inconceivable in the case of a youthful prophet on the threshold of his public career; and it has been very generally held that this part of the vision is projected into the past from the disappointing experience of failure which came to the prophet some years later. But there is no justification for thus impugning the veracity of Isaiah's narrative. There is nothing incredible in the thought that in that supreme moment of inspiration the conviction was flashed into his mind that a revelation of Jehovah's holiness would be intolerable to the age in which he lived, so that the men he knew would be repelled and driven into deeper guilt and sin by every fresh disclosure of the mind and will of God. He saw, what perhaps no earlier teacher of Israel had seen, that the very clearness and fulness of the knowledge of God becomes a means of condemnation to men who have sunk so far that they love the darkness rather than the light. Thus while Amos speaks of a "famine of the word of the Lord" as the greatest calamity that could befall Israel, Isaiah grasps the deeper, though seemingly paradoxical truth, that a far more dangerous and testing experience lies in the exceeding abundance of the word of Jehovah, which is about to be vouchsafed to Israel¹.

The profound truth of this intuition was repeatedly verified in Isaiah's prophetic experience, and more than once he falls back on it, tracing the impenetrable hardness of the people to a judicial visitation of Jehovah. He did so when he retired defeated from his contest with Ahaz and the nation in the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic war, which was probably the occasion of the first publication of the vision. In still stronger language he characterises the storm of opposition which was roused against him by his denunciation of the Egyptian alliance in the reign of Sennacherib. "They say to the prophets...get you out of the way,

¹ Duhm.

turn aside out of the path, *cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us*" (xxx. 11); and Isaiah ascribes their infatuation to the fact that "Jehovah has poured out on them a spirit of deep sleep, and closed their eyes and muffled their heads" (xxix. 10).

Isaiah has been called the "prophet of Faith"; and the designation would be accurate if he were not the prophet of so many great thoughts besides. The idea that faith must be the ruling principle of political action for Israel, and is the indispensable condition of national salvation, is one to which he always attached supreme importance. There are three memorable sayings of his in which this truth is embodied, and which enable us to understand in what sense he used that great word of religion. These are: "if ye will not believe, ye shall not be established" (vii. 9); "he that believeth shall not make haste" (xxviii. 16,—see note on the verse); "in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (xxx. 15). These utterances seem to carry us into the very heart of Isaiah's teaching, for they express that which was deepest in his own spiritual life. To him revelation was an articulate personal word from the living God, the Holy One whom he had seen in vision; and he received it with the unhesitating confidence due to a Being of infinite wisdom and power, declaring His purpose in absolute faithfulness and truth. Isaiah believed and therefore he spoke. And knowing thus by experience what it was to live by faith, he dared to ask of statesmen groping their way blindly in a difficult and intricate situation, not seeing for themselves the work of Jehovah nor the operation of His hands, that they too should exercise the same virtue of implicit trust in the God whose sovereign will was made known to them in the prophetic word. There is no manifestation of loyalty to the Divine King on which the prophet lays greater stress than this. The capacity for faith in this sense becomes the measure and test of the nation's religious state; its refusal to believe is the final evidence that it is beyond the possibility of political salvation. Even when the fate of the people as a whole is sealed by the unbelief of its rulers, faith

remains as the principle of individual religion for those who separate themselves from the sin of their generation. The spiritual community which Isaiah saw forming itself within the physical Israel was constituted by faith in his prophetic message, and when he says of himself that he will "wait for Jehovah" (viii. 17), he expresses at the same time the attitude of those who were his disciples. When in a later prophecy (xxviii. 16) he speaks of the foundation of God's kingdom as already laid in Zion and promises safety to "him that believeth," he clearly means that the impending judgment has no terrors for him who takes his stand on the sure word of Revelation.

III. MESSIANIC IDEALS.

For the germ of Isaiah's eschatology we must go back once more to his inaugural vision, and the idea of the "remnant," which led to so many fruitful developments in the course of his ministry. The knowledge that a spiritual kernel of the nation would survive the successive waves of judgment was constantly present to the prophet's mind, and led his thoughts forward to an ideal age in which that remnant should blossom out into the perfect kingdom of the Lord. His writings abound in glowing pictures of the glorious day towards which events are ripening. The general conception is that of a new and final order of things, in which Zion, as the seat of God's kingdom of righteousness and peace, is the centre of light and blessing for the nations, and all nature becomes subservient to the needs of humanity. The representation includes features which are to our minds supernatural, although on the whole it may be said that (except in iv. 2—6) nature is merely idealised, through its evils being eliminated and its beneficent powers indefinitely enhanced. The later pictures especially (xxix. ff.) are bathed in an atmosphere of idyllic peace and happiness, the simple joys of rural life affording apparently to the aged prophet the best emblem of the perfect felicity reserved for the true people of Jehovah. For along with this line of thought there always goes the prophecy of a transformation of the national character. The

evil-doer is rooted out of the community, the poor and afflicted rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, the spiritual blindness which was characteristic of the people is taken away; and the true knowledge of God is diffused through all ranks and classes of society (xxix. 18 ff., xxx. 19 ff.). The blessings of Jehovah's government radiate from Israel to all the nations of the earth; "from Zion goes forth revelation and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" (ii. 2—4). It is noteworthy that here and elsewhere (xviii. 7, xix. 24 f.¹) the nations are represented as retaining their political independence, and voluntarily submitting to the rule of Jehovah, whose just arbitrament supersedes war and brings in an era of universal peace. Finally it is to be remarked that this golden age is not conceived as a remote goal of history or the result of a long development, but as the immediate sequel of the prophet's own age, following closely on the desolation caused by the Assyrian conquest. In the most brilliant of his Messianic visions Isaiah compares it to a great light breaking on the land, dissipating the darkness of the invasion, bringing victory and rejoicing and prosperity in its train (ix. 1 ff.).

There is just one respect in which Isaiah's doctrine of the Remnant may be supposed to have given a peculiar direction to his anticipation of the future as compared with that of other prophets. The salvation of the remnant is to be effected on the soil of Judah. Hence the idea of a captivity, though not altogether foreign to his thinking (see v. 13), has not the religious significance which attaches to it in the prophecy of Hosea, or Jeremiah or Ezekiel. These prophets all appear to have regarded the Exile as the essential part of the discipline by which the conversion of Israel was to be effected, and they contemplated a captivity either of the entire nation or at least of that part of it with which the hope of the future lay. To Isaiah on the other hand captivity is a mere detail. The great redemption is to be wrought out within the land of Judah, and (in the later prophecies at least) by a deliverance of the capital from the power of the Assyrians. The "holy seed," the nucleus of the new

¹ Possibly not Isaiah's.

kingdom of God, remains in the land; and the continuity of the national history is never absolutely broken¹.

The development of Isaiah's conceptions of the future, so far as it can be traced, turns on two great central ideas round which all the elements of his Messianic predictions group themselves. One is the idea of the personal Messiah, and the other the doctrine of the inviolability of Zion.

I. The word "Messiah" (anointed one) is never used in the Old Testament in the special sense to which it has been consecrated by Jewish and Christian usage. But it is the most appropriate term for that conception of an ideal King of the house of David, which so far as appears originated with Isaiah, and which proved to be the most perfect of all types of the Kingdom of God to be found in prophecy. The prophecies of Isaiah where the figure of this ideal King appears are ch. ix. 1—7, xi. 1—9 and xxxii. 1 ff. (cf. also xxxiii. 17). It is unfortunate that the dates of these passages cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. The prevalent view has been that they stand in chronological order, the first belonging to the reign of Ahaz, the second to an early period of Hezekiah's reign, and the last to the time of Sennacherib's invasion. But this view rests mainly on the assumption that they belong historically to the groups of discourses in which they occur, an assumption which is insufficiently supported by internal indications and hardly justified by a literary analysis of the book. Hence it is impossible to trace with confidence the history of the idea in Isaiah's mind or to fix the time when it was first disclosed to him. Another difficulty arises in connexion with the Immanuel prophecy of ch. vii. 14—16. If it could be assumed that in the mind of Isaiah the child Immanuel was identified with the child of ix. 6 f., and was therefore the destined sovereign of his people, it would go far to explain the genesis of the conception of the ideal representative of the Davidic dynasty. At that moment Ahaz must have appeared to the prophet an incarnation of all

¹ The passage xi. 10 ff., which speaks of a return of exiles, is of doubtful genuineness; and one of the arguments against it is just the use of the word "remnant" for those who have gone into captivity.

that the King of Israel should not be, and although the child Immanuel is not expressly connected with the house of David, the idea that he was to take the place of the worthless and incompetent monarch to whom the sign was given is nevertheless suggested by the circumstances of the prophecy (see note on vii. 14—16). It is at least a remarkable coincidence that both here and in ix. 6 the destiny of the nation is made to turn on the birth of a child, and even if with most recent authorities we reject the Messianic interpretation of vii. 14, there will still remain a presumption that the two passages stand near to each other in time. If this conclusion be correct it follows that the image of the ideal Ruler first dawned on Isaiah's mind in the dark days when he saw the ruin of his country accelerated by the weakness and unbelief of the reigning king.

It has been remarked that the three great portraits of the Messiah, taken in the order in which they stand, exhibit a progressive waning of the mysterious aspects of His character, until at last the ideal seems to fade into the light of common day. It is undoubtedly the fact that the attributes and prerogatives of the King come to be presented in more sober and subdued colours and in less exalted language. In ix. 6, he is endowed with attributes bordering on the divine ; his fourfold name expressing some extraordinary and mysterious relation to Jehovah. He is called "Wonderful Counsellor, Hero-God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace." In xi. 1 ff., he is described as the shoot from the stock of Jesse, and as one uniquely endowed with the spirit of Jehovah for the perfect discharge of his kingly functions. And in xxxii. 1 he appears simply as an ordinary good king, reigning in righteousness and associated with princes of a like spirit ruling in judgment.

These facts no doubt suggest questions of some interest and difficulty. But the sense of disparity between the different representations is relieved by two considerations which have to be borne in mind in dealing with Isaiah's conception of the Messiah. In the first place, the thought of the Messianic King never replaces or overshadows in Isaiah's mind the primary truth of Jehovah's kingship over Israel. The earthly king is the

representative of Jehovah and rules in His name, but he is not himself conceived as a superhuman person, or as sharing the divine nature in a transcendental sense. This is clear as regards the second of the three passages (xi. 1 ff.) where the ideal perfection of the Messiah's government is ascribed simply to his possession of the fulness of the spirit of Jehovah which imparts to him the insight, the energy, and the piety necessary for his high office. And this is in accordance with the common teaching of the Old Testament that the source of all kingly virtues, as indeed of all capacity for noble and heroic action, is the spirit of the Lord, resting on men chosen by God for great achievements in His kingdom. Nor does the language of ix. 6 f. when fairly interpreted imply that the new king is more than human. What is there described is neither the person of the Messiah nor his character, but the divine powers that come to light in his government. There is no reason to think that even the great titles there bestowed on him, marvellously as they foreshadow the Christian doctrine of the Person of Christ, expressed to Isaiah's age anything more than this. When we read that his name shall be called "Hero-God," or "Everlasting Father," we are not to understand these terms as conveying the idea that he is a God-man, or possesses the metaphysical attributes of omnipotence and eternity. All the four names denote aspects of the Messiah's rule, which is itself, in virtue of his unique relation to God, the perfect embodiment and reflection of Jehovah's kingship over Israel and the world. His relation to Jehovah is, in short, simply the ideal relation of a king of Israel to Jehovah, and the only new thing is the completeness with which that ideal is to be realised through his endowment with the spirit of God. Now it is possible that Isaiah may have had a deeper sense at one time than at others of the exceptional qualities required for the exercise of the functions of kingship, and this may account for the difference of tone which characterises his utterances at different periods. But a radical change of view does not appear to exist, when we remember that from first to last his outlook was towards one who should fully realise the divine ends for which the monarchy existed in Israel.

The second thing to be observed is that in Isaiah's vision of the future the monarchy itself is but one institution among many, and presupposes a political organisation after the fashion of the existing Hebrew commonwealth. Hence there could be no incongruity, from the prophet's point of view, in thinking of the Messianic king as surrounded by an aristocracy, who cooperate with him in securing a just administration of the reconstructed state (xxxii. 1). A reform of the upper classes was an issue of the judgment on which Isaiah laid great stress from an early period of his work (i. 26); and there is nothing to suggest that he ever lost sight of this, although he afterwards attached greater importance to the person of the king. It is true that in xxxii. 1 the person of the king is not invested with the halo of divine attributes spoken of in ch. ix. and xi.; and this might seem to shew that the passage ought not to be classed amongst the prophecies of a personal Messiah. But that is a view which cannot be held, unless we go further and say that Isaiah had definitely abandoned the idea of the Messiah when he wrote ch. xxxii. The picture is in any case a picture of the Messianic age, and the king in the Messianic age is the Messiah, if the prophet retained his faith in a Messiah at all, which there is no sufficient reason to doubt. And in fact when he speaks of a king reigning in righteousness, he includes what is essential in his conception of the ideal King; for it is just the perfect discharge of the recognised duties of kingship which Isaiah regards as a task of such transcendent importance as to require the unique endowment of divine energies and virtues which is the distinctive element in his more ideal delineations of the Messiah.

2. The two ideas that Zion is the present seat of Jehovah's sovereignty and that it is to be the centre of the future kingdom of God appear in a large number of prophecies of Isaiah (i. 26 f., ii. 2—4, iv. 2—6, viii. 18, x. 32 f., xiv. 32, xviii. 7, xxviii. 16, xxix. 1, xxx. 19, 29, [xxxiii. 5, 14, 20 f.,] xxxvii. 32). In these there is nothing that is peculiar to Isaiah and little that requires explanation. It was in the Temple that he first saw the glory of Jehovah, and the thought that He dwelt there seems to have

been always present to his mind. And the further thought that Zion would occupy the same central position in the ideal age as in the present is a natural and inevitable consequence of the general principle that the future dispensation is always represented under forms derived from the present.

But there is a particular application of these truths which is not only distinctive of Isaiah, but apparently limited to a certain period of his ministry. It is that Zion as Jehovah's sanctuary is inviolable, that it shall be spared in the impending crisis of judgment, and form the refuge for those who are saved from the wreck of the nation, so that its sanctity becomes, along with the permanence of the Davidic kingdom, a pledge of the indestructibility of the Jewish state. This concrete form of the principle does not appear to have been held by the prophet at the outset of his public life, for in ch. v. 14, 17 the destruction of Jerusalem seems to be distinctly contemplated. Nor is it clear that it was enunciated even in the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitish war, although the allusion to the waters of Shiloah as an emblem of Jehovah's invisible sovereignty and the emphasis laid on Jehovah's dwelling in Zion (viii. 6, 18) may perhaps point in this direction. The first unambiguous expression of it is probably to be found in xiv. 32, where we read that "Jehovah hath founded Zion and there the poor of His people find refuge." From this time onwards Isaiah seems to have held to the truth as the sheet anchor of his prophecy. We have seen already how largely it determined his attitude in the Assyrian invasion, and how signally his confidence was justified by the event. The assault on the sanctuary of Zion is the crowning insult of the Assyrian to the majesty of Jehovah, and by His protection of Jerusalem Jehovah gives to the world the demonstration of His divinity which as Isaiah anticipated would be speedily followed by the establishment of His everlasting kingdom. It must be admitted, however, that there is considerable uncertainty as to the precise sense in which Isaiah maintained this doctrine, and the range which he allowed to it, even in this last stage of his work. There is one oracle, usually assigned to this period (xxxii. 9 ff.), which seems to

amount to a prediction of the total overthrow of Jerusalem, and for this reason is pronounced spurious by many critics, and by one at least is assigned to the opening of his career. And in other passages threats are uttered (esp. xxii. 1 ff., xxix. 1 ff.) which appear to contemplate an equally sweeping catastrophe. The difficulty is to know how much is implied in the idea of the sanctity of Zion; how far it is equivalent to the actual preservation of the fortress of Jerusalem, and how far it is a spiritual fact symbolising the safety of those who in that hour of trial placed their faith in Jehovah's invisible power. The prophet may not have held an unvarying view on this point, and it is possible that the doctrine of the inviolability of Jerusalem was not to his mind the hard and fast dogma which it has become in the hands of his commentators.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHARACTER AND GENIUS OF ISAIAH.

THE possibilities of the prophetic office are nowhere more splendidly illustrated than in the career of Isaiah. Called in early manhood to the service of Jehovah, he gave himself to his mission with a whole-hearted devotion and singleness of aim which suffered no abatement in the course of a long and strenuous life. The work of a prophet was the vocation of his life, and every faculty of his being, every source of influence open to him, his social position and even the incidents of his private history, were all made subservient to the one end of impressing the mind of God on his generation. And to this task he brought a nature richly endowed with gifts belonging to the highest order of genius. He is great alike in thought and action, and unites the profoundest religious insight with a wide knowledge of men and affairs. If any single quality can be selected as specially prominent in Isaiah it is an imperious and masterful decision of character which makes him perfectly unhesitating in his judgments and inexorable in his demands. But more remarkable than any one feature is the balance and

harmonious working of powers rarely combined in a single individual. In the union of statesmanlike sagacity with impassioned and dignified oratory he may be compared with some of the greatest names in the history of republican Rome; but Isaiah had, besides, the rapt vision of the seer and the fervour of religious enthusiasm. We must not be afraid to think of him as a 'visionary.' His perceptions of spiritual truth were such as we call intuitive and were frequently accompanied by experiences of an ecstatic kind. Although but one vision is recorded (ch. vi.) he uses several expressions which point to extraordinary mental processes as the form in which the will of Jehovah was communicated to him. He speaks of himself as being in the "grasp of the (divine) hand" (viii. 11); and of Jehovah of Hosts as revealed "in his ears" (v. 9, xxii. 14): phrases which probably indicate that throughout life Isaiah was guided by that mysterious operation of the divine Spirit which appears to have been common to all the prophets. But whilst himself overmastered by the convictions that were thus conveyed to him, he manifests the most complete self-possession in the application of these truths to the circumstances of his time. In action as in speech he ever proves himself the sanest of men. His political vision is clear and untroubled, his judgment unerring, his maxims invariably reasonable and wise. "Never perhaps has there been another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet on the solid earth, with his heart in the things of eternity and with mouth and hand in the things of time, with his spirit in the eternal counsel of God and his body in a very definite moment of history¹."

The literary quality most conspicuous in the writings of Isaiah is the wealth and brilliancy of his imagination. His thought constantly and spontaneously blossoms into imagery, and the images are no mere rhetorical embellishments but are always impressive in themselves and always the appropriate and natural expression of his idea. No other Old Testament writer has the same power of picturesque and graphic description, or has at command such a variety of distinct and vivid impressions from

¹ Valeton, *Vierde Voorlezingen*, p. 33.

nature. His memory is stored with simple and homely pictures of rustic life, and these rise to his mind invested with a singular dignity and charm in the light of some inspiring and lofty idea. The reapers in the valley of Rephaim, and the beating of the olive trees (xvii. 5 f.), the ox and ass faithful to their master's stable (i. 3), the lion growling over his prey and defying the *posse* of shepherds gathered against him (xxxi. 4), the subtle rent spreading downwards in the wall until it falls with a sudden and terrible crash (xxx. 13 f.), the deserted hut of the vineyard-watchers after the vintage is past (i. 8): these are some of the images which his poet's eye had gathered from scenes familiar to every native of Palestine. Nor does Isaiah's imagination fail him when he passes from the familiar to the stupendous, and calls up the destructive agencies of nature to set forth the awful terrors of the day of Jehovah. The forest conflagration (ix. 18, x. 16), the inundating flood of waters (viii. 7 f.), the thunderstorm (xxx. 30 f.), the earthquake (ii. 12 ff.) furnish him with emblems, strikingly effective, of the final catastrophe in which the existing order of things is to perish. On the other hand, there is a peculiar charm in the indistinctness of the descriptions of the latter days, where images of earthly comfort and security shade away imperceptibly into suggestions of a new creation, in which to our minds there is more of heaven than earth.

As a master of style Isaiah is supreme among the prophets; the only one with whom he can be compared being his predecessor Amos. While others seem conscious of the labour of expression, he wields the resources of the language with the ease and dexterity of a perfect artist in words. There is an astonishing directness and sureness of touch in his phrase, as of one who knows when he has hit the mark and does not need to strike a second time. The high level of literary excellence maintained in the prophecies depends largely on the fact that they faithfully preserve (though doubtless with some condensation) all the effects of the spoken word. The style is one obviously formed for the purposes of the orator, who must carry his audience with him at the moment, trusting nothing to a

sustained effort of attention on their part. Hence it is absolutely free from affectations and obscurities; and even the fondness for paronomasia which is often attributed to Isaiah is really shewn very sparingly and never without telling oratorical effect. The poetic form in which the oracles are usually cast affords no presumption against this view of their origin; for in Hebrew the formal difference between poetry and prose is much less marked than with us, and all impassioned and elevated speech readily falls into the simple rhythmic structure characteristic of Hebrew poetry. It would hardly be possible to characterize the style of Isaiah better than by the four notes under which Matthew Arnold has summed up the distinctive qualities of Homer's genius: Plainness of thought, Plainness of style, Nobleness, and Rapidity. Enough has perhaps been suggested to illustrate the aptness with which each of these terms may be applied to Isaiah. In this case, as in others, the style is the man; and in the plainness, and nobleness, and rapidity of Isaiah's recorded discourses we read the signature of the glowing and impetuous nature, the lucid intellect, and the quick decision of character which made this prophet so great a force in the history of his time.

CHAPTER V.

PROBABLE COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH— CONTENTS OF CH. I.—XXXIX.

THE book which bears the name of Isaiah is in reality a collection of prophetic oracles, shewing manifest traces of composite authorship, and having a complicated literary history behind it. Not much less than two-thirds of its bulk consists of anonymous prophecies, all of which (with the probable exception of ch. xv. f. and the possible exception of ch. ii. 1—4) are of an age long subsequent to that of Isaiah. To this class belongs first of all the whole of the latter part of the book, commencing with ch. xl., the date and authorship of which will be fully dealt with in the Introduction to the second volume of this commentary.

But even when we confine our attention to ch. i.—xxxix. we still find abundant evidences of great diversity of authorship. Excluding the narrative section (ch. xxxvi.—xxxix.) it is estimated that of the prophetic chapters (i.—xxxv.) a little over two-thirds is occupied by genuine prophecies of Isaiah. In the following synopsis, passages which are probably to be assigned to other writers than Isaiah are marked by an asterisk; for the grounds on which this conclusion rests in each case, as well as for the dates attached to the Isaianic oracles, the reader must be referred to the Introductory Notes on the several sections.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS I.—XXXIX.

This first part of the Book of Isaiah naturally falls into four main divisions: (A) ch. i.—xii.; (B) ch. xiii.—xxvii.; (C) ch. xxviii.—xxxv.; (D) ch. xxxvi.—xxxix. Of these the first three must have circulated as separate books, while the last is mainly an extract from the second book of Kings.

A. Ch. i.—xii. A volume of discourses mainly (though not exclusively) concerning "Judah and Jerusalem," as stated in the superscription (ch. i. 1). The grouping of the oracles seems to shew that the book was formed by the amalgamation of several minor collections.

i. Ch. i. is an introductory oracle setting forth the grounds of Jehovah's controversy with Israel. Its date may be the close of the Syro-Ephraimitic war (c. 734), although the first part (*vv.* 1—17) is assigned by many critics to the time of Sennacherib (701).

ii. Ch. ii.—iv. A résumé of the very earliest discourses of Isaiah (ii. 6—iv. 1), with a prologue (ii. 2—4) and an epilogue (iv. 2—6), both of Messianic import. The new title (ii. 1) suggests that this short collection once existed separately.

iii. Ch. v. 1—24 (somewhat later than the preceding) contains the parable of the vineyard (1—7) followed by a series of woes against the prevalent sins of the upper classes (8—24).

iv. Ch. v. 25—30 is the misplaced conclusion of the oracle against Northern Israel (see vi. below).

v. Ch. vi.—ix. 7 a series of discourses written for the most part in the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion, and probably published shortly after that event. It consists of:

(1) A preface (ch. vi.), describing Isaiah's inaugural vision of God and consecration to the prophetic office.

(2) An account of the prophet's eventful interview with Ahaz, and prophecies arising out of it (ch. vii.).

(3) Further accounts of the prophet's activity during this period (ch. viii.).

(4) A prophecy of the Messianic deliverance and the coming of the Prince of Peace (ch. ix. 1—7).

vi. Ch. ix. 8—x. 4 (and v. 25—30). Announcement of the impending ruin of the kingdom of Ephraim (written perhaps before the alliance with Syria).

vii. Ch. x. 5—34. An oracle dealing with the mission and fate of Assyria. The most probable date is the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib (c. 704).

viii. Ch. xi. Two Messianic prophecies.

(1) *vv.* 1—9. The Messiah and his kingdom,—possibly the conclusion of ch. x.; otherwise the date is uncertain.

*(2) *vv.* 10—16. The Return of Exiled Israelites from all quarters of the earth.

*ix. Ch. xii. forms a lyrical epilogue to the book (A).

B. Ch. xiii.—xxvii. A series of prophecies by various authors, mostly dealing with foreign nations.

*(1) Ch. xiii.—xiv. 23. On the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus (written towards the close of the Exile).

(2) Ch. xiv. 24—32. Two oracles of Isaiah's, one (apparently a fragment, *vv.* 24—27) announcing the destruction of Assyria, the other (*vv.* 28—32) directed against the Philistines. The last is dated in the year of Ahaz's death; the other probably belongs to the same time as ch. x. 5 ff.

*(3) Ch. xv., xvi. On Moab. It is probably the work of an unknown early writer, revised with a postscript (xvi. 13 f.) by Isaiah.

(4) Ch. xvii. 1—11. On the overthrow of Damascus and North Israel (written at the time of the alliance between the two powers in the reign of Ahaz).

(5) Ch. xvii. 12—14. The destruction of the Assyrians (date uncertain).

(6) Ch. xviii. The same subject, in the form of a charge to Ethiopian ambassadors (from the beginning of Sennacherib's reign).

(7) Ch. xix. On Egypt. The date cannot be determined. The last part (*vv.* 16—25) is possibly a post-exilic addition.

(8) Ch. xx. On the fate of Egypt at the hands of the Assyrians. The date is 711.

*(9) Ch. xxi. Three oracles, on Babylon (*vv.* 1—10), on Edom (*vv.* 11, 12), and Arabia (*vv.* 13—17). Probably written near the end of the Exile.

(10) Ch. xxii. 1—14. A rebuke addressed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the crisis of the Assyrian invasion (701).

(11) Ch. xxii. 15—25. A philippic against a high court official named Shebna; probably from the time of Isaiah's opposition to the alliance with Egypt.

(12) Ch. xxiii. On Tyre. The date is probably either in the reign of Shalmaneser (c. 727) or that of Sennacherib. The appendix (*vv.* 15—18) appears to be post-exilic.

*(13) Ch. xxiv.—xxvii. A long eschatological prophecy of the world-judgment and the blessedness of Israel lying beyond it. The date is much disputed, but on the whole the most probable view seems to be that it belongs to the 4th century B.C.

C. Ch. xxviii.—xxxv. A collection of oracles issued (so far as they are Isaianic) during the invasion of Sennacherib.

i. Ch. xxviii. consists of three sections :

(1) *vv.* 1—6. Announcement of the fall of Samaria (written therefore before 722, but probably republished as a preface to this group).

(2) *vv.* 7—22. An encounter between Isaiah and the dissolute courtiers of Jerusalem, with related oracles.

(3) *vv.* 23—29. A parable of Jehovah's providential dealings with Israel.

ii. Ch. xxix. contains

(1) A prediction of the humiliation and ultimate deliverance of Jerusalem (*vv.* 1—8).

(2) A rebuke of the spiritual blindness and hardness of the people (*vv.* 9—14).

(3) An allusion to the conspiracy with Egypt, passing abruptly into a description of the ideal future age (*vv.* 15—24).

iii. Ch. xxx. consists of four sections :

- (1) A woe against the promoters of the Egyptian alliance (*vv.* 1—7).
- (2) Isaiah's written protest against this step and the irreligious state of mind from which it proceeds (*vv.* 8—17).
- (3) A picture of the Messianic age (*vv.* 18—26).
- (4) A judgment scene on the Assyrian king and army (*vv.* 27—33).

iv. Ch. xxxi. A renewed denunciation of the Egyptian treaty (*vv.* 1—4); followed by a promise of mercy to Israel and a threat against Assyria (*vv.* 5—9).

v. Ch. xxxii. 1—8. A picture of the ideal commonwealth of the Messianic age.

vi. Ch. xxxii. 9—20. A censure of the careless demeanour of the women of Jerusalem (*vv.* 9—14); passing again into a picture of the blessedness of the future (*vv.* 15—20).

*vii. Ch. xxxiii. A woe against an unnamed oppressor, the writer rising, through prayer, to the anticipation of the glories of the perfect kingdom of God.

*viii. Ch. xxxiv., xxxv. A prophecy of vengeance on Edom and of the future blessedness of Israel. (Post-exilic.)

D. *Ch. xxxvi.—xxxix. A historical section, narrating :

- (1) Sennacherib's demand for the surrender of Jerusalem (ch. xxxvi. f.).
- (2) Hezekiah's sickness and cure (ch. xxxviii.).
- (3) The embassy of Merodach-baladan (ch. xxxix.).

If we compare this analysis with the sketch of Isaiah's career given above (pp. xxv ff.) it is at once obvious that the book as a whole shews no consistent attempt at chronological arrangement. Not only are the anonymous prophecies interspersed amongst those of Isaiah, but even the genuine discourses of Isaiah stand in an entirely different order from that in which they were uttered. We observe further that the Isaianic material is unequally distributed over the principal divisions of the book. While A and C are in the main homogeneous (the anonymous passages occurring only at the end, where we might

expect them¹), in B the Isaianic oracles are scattered indiscriminately through the collection and occupy a much smaller proportion of the whole. These facts, together with the obviously composite structure of A point irresistibly to the conclusion that the book of Isaiah has reached its present form through protracted editorial processes, the details of which we can never hope to trace.

In explanation of this somewhat surprising result of criticism it may be desirable to call attention to a general characteristic of prophecy which ought here to be kept in mind. The prophets (at least the pre-exilic prophets) were in the first instance not writers of books but public orators and statesmen. While they availed themselves of literature as a means of preserving the substance of their teaching, they relied chiefly on the immediate effect of their spoken words; and the methods by which their discourses were reduced to writing naturally varied with different prophets, or even with the same prophet at different times. In some cases little more than rough notes of the speeches might be preserved, in others they must have been carefully worked up into finished artistic compositions. Whether a particular prophet was ever led to prepare a complete edition of his prophecies depended on the exigencies of his individual position. In the case of Jeremiah we have an instructive account of the circumstances in which, under special divine direction, he addressed himself to this task (ch. xxxvi.); and the volume then written doubtless formed the basis of all subsequent editions of the book of Jeremiah. Nothing exactly similar to this is recorded of Isaiah; but he appears to have followed the practice of issuing carefully written digests of his oral teaching at important junctures of his ministry. These separate rolls, and perhaps other prophecies which he had never given to the public at all, were probably treasured by his

¹ It is right to state, however, that several other passages in C are denied to Isaiah by a considerable number of recent critics: especially xxx. 27—33, xxxii. 1—8 and 9—20. Some even have gone so far as to dispute the genuineness of *all* the promises of salvation found in this section.

disciples and handed down to subsequent generations, until they ultimately found a place in one or other of the collections of which the present book is composed.

Of these aggregates the most interesting and the most complex is the first (A, ch. i.—xii.). The nucleus of the collection was probably the important volume written by Isaiah at the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic war (see above p. xxxi); including originally perhaps ch. vi.—viii. 18, to which viii. 19—ix. 7 was added as a supplement. To this two earlier rolls (ii.—iv. and v.) were prefixed, for chronological reasons; the displacement of v. 25—30 was probably accidental and must have taken place while the oracles were still detached. The great oracle on North Israel (also of early date) was placed where it stands because it does not bear on the destiny of Judah; and it is naturally followed by the prophecy on Assyria (x. 5—34), to which the Messianic passage ch. xi. 1—9 may have already been attached. Ch. i. owes its position to its comprehensive character, and its obvious suitability to form an introduction to any volume of Isaiah's prophecies. Thus far the collection might have been completed not long after the death of Isaiah; but the addition of the late passages xi. 10—xii. 6 appears to indicate that the volume existed separately till a time subsequent to the Exile.

The third collection (C, ch. xxviii.—xxxv.) must have had a history somewhat similar, though less intricate. It probably originated with what Isaiah is recorded to have written when he retired defeated from the contest with the Egyptian party at court (see above, p. xxxviii). How many of the present prophecies were included in this publication cannot of course be determined with certainty; but it doubtless contained all those referring to the Egyptian alliance, and therefore most of what we now read in ch. xxviii.—xxxi. Ch. xxxii. may have been added afterwards, and ch. xxxiii.—xxxv. belong in all likelihood to the post-exilic age.

The intermediate collection (B, ch. xiii.—xxvii.) is of a different character. It is a series of miscellaneous oracles, most of them furnished with specific headings, in which the word

massa (A.V. "burden") regularly occurs—a term found nowhere else in the book except in ch. xxx. 6¹. There is, indeed, no reason to suppose that in the intention of the compiler it was restricted to prophecies of Isaiah, although the fact that the first happened to bear his name naturally caused the whole to be attributed to him. Since with one exception (ch. xv. f.) the non-Isaianic passages are of exilic or post-exilic date, the collection cannot have been formed till a late period. It is not quite certain that the long apocalyptic prophecy of ch. xxiv.—xxvii. belonged to this group, although its position, at the close of a cycle of oracles dealing with the heathen world is somewhat in favour of this hypothesis. If so, the book must have been distinct from A and C down to a very late date, for if the three had been amalgamated, ch. xxiv. ff. would have found its appropriate place at the close, alongside of xxxiv. f.

The historical section (D) may be assumed to have been added as an appendix to the other three after they had been united. Thus for the first time all the scattered remains of Isaiah's work were brought within the compass of a single volume, which must again have for a time had a separate existence, until finally it was combined with the great prophecy of ch. xl.—lxvi.

An inferior limit for the redaction of the book of Isaiah is furnished by the work of Jesus the son of Sirach, written as is generally supposed about 200 B.C. In Ecclus. xlviii. 23—25 we read that "in his (Isaiah's) days the sun went backward and he added life to the king. He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at the last; and he comforted them that mourned in Zion. He shewed the things that should be to the end of time, and the hidden things or ever they came." These references appear to imply that the writer read Isa. xxxvi.—xxxix. and xl.—lxvi. as parts of one book; and as ch. xxxvi.—xxxix. have no meaning apart from i.—xxxv., it is a tolerably

¹ The peculiar enigmatic titles of xxi. 1, 11 (? 13), xxii. 1 (xxx. 6), have been thought to point to the existence of a prior group embracing these five prophecies; but the indication is too slight to throw much light on the growth of the collection.

safe conclusion that the book of Isaiah was known in its present form in the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. Before this we have no literary evidence of the existence of the Book. Although the Chronicler (writing about a century earlier) mentions Isaiah as an author (2 Chron. xxvi. 22 ; xxxii. 32), his statements do not appear to have any reference to the book of his prophecies. It is doubtful if either passage means more than that Isaiah was regarded as the writer of the contemporary annals of the kings of Judah. But in the time of the son of Sirach the prophetic Canon was probably already completed, and the separate books of which it is composed must be at least of somewhat higher antiquity.

The canonicity of Isaiah was never questioned by the Jewish Church in later times. There is, however, a curious divergence of tradition with regard to its place amongst the prophetic scriptures. The order of the E.V., where the book stands first among the "Later Prophets" (the strictly prophetic writings) is that of all printed editions of the Hebrew Bible, as well as of the Masora and the best MSS. In the LXX. it stands first amongst the Major Prophets, but is preceded by the so-called Minor Prophets. A still more peculiar arrangement is given by the Talmudic treatise *Baba bathra* (fol. 14 b), where the order is: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the Twelve (minor) Prophets. It has been thought by some that this arrangement betrays a dim consciousness of the late authorship of the second part of the book, which is possible, although the Jewish authorities know nothing of it, and explain the traditional order by reasoning of a somewhat nebulous kind. (For full details on this subject see Ryle, *Canon of the Old Testament*, pp. 273 ff., 281 f.).

* * As the plan of this series does not admit of regular citation of authorities, a list is here given of the principal works on Isaiah consulted in the preparation of the commentary: The Commentaries of Vitringa (1724), Gesenius (1821), Hitzig (1833), Cheyne (5th Ed. 1889), Bredenkamp (1887), Delitzsch (4th Ed. 1889), Dillmann (1890), Duhm (1892). Ewald, *Propheten des Alten Bundes*, Vol. 1. (2nd Ed. 1867). Strachey, *Jewish History and Politics*, &c. (2nd Ed. 1874). W. R. Smith, *The*

Prophets of Israel (1882, Revised Ed. 1895). Guthe, *Das Zukunftsbild des Jesaias* (1885). Driver, *Isaiah: his Life and Times* (2nd Ed. 1893). G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah* [Expositor's Bible], Vol. 1. (1889). Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets* (1892). Hackmann, *Die Zukunftserwartung des Jesaia* (1893). Cheyne, *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah* (1895).

NOTE ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF ISAIAH'S TIME.

It is an accepted principle amongst modern historians and critics that a true chronology of the Hebrew kingdom must be based on the synchronisms established by the Assyrian monuments. From a very early time the Assyrians followed the system of naming each year after a high official of the empire; continuous lists of these eponyms were kept and have been discovered; and in these lists (the so-called Eponym Canon) we have a complete guide to Assyrian chronology, the accuracy of which has been confirmed by every test to which it has been subjected. The Old Testament writers, on the other hand (at the time with which we are concerned), proceed on no fixed chronological system; their statements are frequently at variance with each other, and the attempt to treat them as absolute historical data often leads to inextricable confusion. In these circumstances there is no course open to us but to accept the evidence of the cuneiform inscriptions so far as it is available, and to fill in the details of the scheme as best we may. The most probable results are given in the annexed Table, where events that can be dated from Assyrian records are distinguished by italics. The figures are in some instances only approximate; and there are two dates of importance for Isaiah's biography, with regard to which it seems impossible to arrive at any certain conclusion.

(1) The first is the year of Uzziah's death, which is also the year of Isaiah's call (ch. vi. 1). From 2 Kings xv. 7 we learn that Uzziah (Azariah) was succeeded by his son Jotham, to whom a reign of 16 years is assigned (v. 33). Since we know (Is. vii. 1) that Ahaz was on the throne in 735, this appears at first sight to give, as the lowest possible date for the death of Uzziah, the year 751. But if, as is probably the case, Jotham's 16 years were reckoned from the time when he assumed the regency on account of his father's leprosy (2 Kings xv. 5), we are really left without information as to the length of his independent reign or the date of Uzziah's death. The date given in the table (740) is an

approximation merely. It cannot be brought much lower than this, because in 735 Isaiah is accompanied by a son, whose name, embodying an idea of the opening vision, shews that he must have been born after the prophet's call. Nor on the other hand can it be placed much higher without throwing the events of 701 into the extreme old age of Isaiah. The chief point that awaits elucidation is the supposed mention of Uzziah by Tiglath-pileser in 739 or 738 (see above, p. xii). If this reference should be ultimately established, the time of Isaiah's call will be settled within very narrow limits indeed.

(2) A much more intricate problem is presented by the second controverted date, that of Hezekiah's accession. The difficulty here arises from the discrepancy of the biblical data. The two chief passages are :

(a) 2 Kings xviii. 10, where the fall of Samaria (*c.* 721) is said to have taken place in the sixth year of Hezekiah ;

(b) 2 Kings xviii. 13, where the year of Sennacherib's invasion (701) is given as the fourteenth of Hezekiah.

If *a* be correct Hezekiah ascended the throne about 727, if *b* be right, about 715. The dates of the siege of Samaria and the invasion of Judah being unassailable, there is no possibility of harmonising these two statements; we must make our choice between them¹. Now, if we consider the two statements by themselves, it will certainly appear less likely that the mistake should be in *a* than in *b*. For if *a* be right, the error in *b* would be only in the numeral, whereas if *b* be right both the figures and the name of the king in *a* must be false; and it would argue an almost incredible degree of carelessness in a historian to assign so important an event as the fall of Samaria to the wrong reign. The case, however, is not quite so simple as this. The date *b* is bound up with the story of Hezekiah's sickness and the extension of his life for 15 years (2 Ki. xx. 6), and this again is closely connected with the ascription to him of a total reign of 29 years (xviii. 2). Hence a mere alteration of the numeral in *b* (say 14 into 24) would not really meet the difficulties, for the numbers 14, 15, 29 are obviously so related that we cannot challenge one of them without challenging a second. That is to say, *if* Hezekiah reigned 29 years, and *if* Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, then his 14th year *must* be the true date of his sickness; and it makes no

¹ Winckler, however (whom Cheyne seems disposed to follow), rejects both in favour of 2 Kings xvi. 2, which assigns to Ahaz a reign of 16 years. Reckoning this from *c.* 735 we get 720 as the proximate date of Hezekiah's accession. But this seems a wholly unjustifiable expedient.

difference whether the compiler got it from tradition or arrived at it by an easy calculation of his own. Now this suggests a probable explanation of the date in xviii. 13. It has been inserted by an editor who assumed that Hezekiah's sickness coincided with the time of Sennacherib's invasion, whereas in reality the events were separated by an interval of 12 years. Such a mistake was a natural inference from the juxtaposition of the two incidents in the separate source whence these narratives were transcribed first in the books of Kings (xviii. 13—xx. 19) and then in the book of Isaiah (xxxvi., xxxix.). (See Introductory Notes to these chapters.) It is not improbable indeed that in the process a transposition of the narratives was effected, Is. xxxviii. f. having originally stood before xxxvi. f. But however that may be, everything points to the conclusion that the 14th year of Hezekiah is the correct date of his sickness and Merodach-baladan's embassy, but erroneous when transferred to Sennacherib's invasion.

We are thus left with 2 Kings xviii. 10 as our surest guide to the year of Hezekiah's accession; and this is the view assumed throughout this work. It is true that it involves a shortening of the reign of Ahaz to about 8 years, and consequently a readjustment of the ages of Ahaz and Hezekiah at their accession (since the former dying at the age of 28 could not have left a son aged 25) but this causes no serious embarrassment, where numbers much more important are indubitably wrong. On general historical grounds neither date can claim to have much advantage over the other. It might be argued that the change of policy towards Assyria, first appearing in 711, would be more intelligible if coincident with a change of sovereign in 715. But there is little force in the argument; and it may be fairly balanced by the consideration that the embassy of Merodach-baladan is more likely to have taken place about 713 than shortly before 701.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE¹.

B.C.	
745.	<i>Accession of Tiglath-pileser III.</i>
740?	Death of Uzziah, Jotham sole ruler. Year of Isaiah's call.
739/8.	<i>Hamath subdued.</i>
c. 736.	Accession of Ahaz.
735.	Syro-Ephraimitic Invasion of Judah.
734.	<i>Gilead, Galilee, &c., ravaged by Assyrians; Pekah dethroned.</i>
732.	<i>Subjugation of Damascus.</i>
727.	<i>Accession of Shalmaneser IV.</i>
c. 727?	Accession of Hezekiah.
c. 727—722.	Shalmaneser blockades Tyre.
722.	<i>Accession of Sargon.</i>
722/1.	<i>Fall of Samaria.</i>
720.	<i>Sargon in Palestine: defeats Egyptians at Raphia.</i>
711.	<i>Capture of Ashdod.</i>
709.	<i>Merodach-baladan expelled from Babylon.</i>
705.	<i>Accession of Sennacherib.</i>
703.	<i>Sennacherib vanquishes Merodach-baladan.</i>
701.	<i>Invasion of Phoenicia, Philistia (battle of Ellekeh) and Judah (deliverance of Jerusalem).</i>
c. 697?	Accession of Manasseh.
681.	<i>Assassination of Sennacherib.</i>

¹ Dates established by the Assyrian monuments are indicated by italics.

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH ARRANGED IN THE
PROBABLE ORDER OF THEIR PUBLICATION.

FIRST GROUP. Previous to the Syro-Ephraimitic War (740—735).

ch. ii.—iv., v. 1—24.

ch. ix. 8—x. 4, v. 25—30.

SECOND GROUP. During and immediately after the Syro-Ephraimitic
War (c. 734).

ch. xvii. 1—11.

ch. vi., ch. vii. f. [? ix. 1—7].

[ch. i. ?]

THIRD GROUP. During the Assyrian Suzerainty (734—705).

ch. xiv. 28—32 (c. 727).

ch. xxviii. 1—4 [6] (before 722).

ch. xx. (711).

FOURTH GROUP. During the Rebellion under Sennacherib (705—
701).

ch. x. 5—34, xiv. 24—27.

[? xvii. 12—14] xviii.

ch. xxviii.—xxxi., xxii. 15 ff.; xxxii. 9—20.

ch. xxii. 1—14.

ch. xxxvii. 22—35.

Of uncertain date: ch. xi. 1—9, xxxii. 1—8, xix., xxiii.



THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw ¹ concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

CH. I. 1. THE SUPERScription.

The verse is probably best understood as the heading of the first great collection of prophecies, ch. i.—xii. The contents of these chapters are described with sufficient accuracy for the purposes of a title; whereas the phrase *concerning Judah and Jerusalem* is unsuitable to many of the later prophecies, and the note of time forbids us to limit the reference to ch. i. The second difficulty (but not the first) might be removed by accepting Vitringa's ingenious suggestion that the first half of the verse (down to "Jerusalem") was originally the title of ch. i., the latter part having been added in order to extend its scope to the whole book. Since, however, there is reason to suppose that ch. i.—xii. once formed a separate volume (see General Introduction, p. lxxii), it is better to adopt the view which most fully accounts for all the particulars of the superscription.

The word *vision* is used here in the wide sense of a collection of prophetic oracles (cf. Nah. i. 1; Obad. 1). As the prophet was called a "seer" (*hōzeh*), and his perception of divine truth was called "seeing," so his message as a whole is termed a "vision" (*hāzōn*). See further on ch. ii. 1, xxx. 10.

Isaiah the son of Amoz] On the name and parentage of the prophet, see General Introduction, p. xxii.

concerning Judah and Jerusalem] as distinguished from prophecies on foreign nations, ch. xiii. ff.

in the days of Uzziah... Judah] The words indicate generally the period covered by Isaiah's public ministry. The author of the title probably understood that the vision of ch. vi. took place in the lifetime of Uzziah. It is not necessary to suppose that he assigned other prophecies to the reign of that king.

CH. I. 2—31. THE LORD'S CONTROVERSY WITH HIS PEOPLE.

The passage falls into two main divisions:—

i. vv. 2—20. The moral and religious issues involved in the great dispute between Jehovah and Israel.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth :
For the LORD hath spoken,

(1) *vv.* 2, 3. Jehovah has discovered rebellion and ingratitude in the sons whom He has reared and brought to honour. This fact, disclosed to the spiritual perception of the prophet, is the basis of the whole subsequent argument.

(2) *vv.* 4—9. The prophet, in his own name, presses home the charge of rebellion; the divine accusation being “translated into passionate invective and threatening by the prophet” (Delitzsch) (*v.* 4). The evidence of Israel’s sin is seen in the calamities of the land; why should they invite further chastisement by persistent disobedience? (5—8). It is of the Lord’s mercy that they are not utterly consumed, like the Cities of the Plain (9).

(3) *vv.* 10—17. Does Israel imagine that Jehovah can be propitiated by costly rites and offerings? Nay, the whole system of ritual worship as practised by them is an intolerable insult to Him (10—15). The prophet’s invective is aimed at a deep-seated fallacy of the popular religion. In opposition to this mistaken notion he demands moral reformation and public righteousness as the only service acceptable to God (16 f.).

(4) *vv.* 18—20. The conclusion of the argument. Jehovah summons the nation to a trial at law, and submits the alternative: prosperity as the reward of obedience, or destruction as the penalty of continued rebellion.

ii. *vv.* 21—31. The necessity for a purifying judgment. This is the prominent idea in the second division of the chapter, but the connexion of thought is less obvious than in the first. The keynote is struck in

(1) *vv.* 21—26. A dirge over the decay of civic virtue in Jerusalem (21—23), followed by a threat of judgment (24 f.), and a picture of the city restored to its pristine purity (26).

(2) *vv.* 27—31. The operation of the judgment is shewn to be two-fold: the deliverance of a converted remnant (27), and the annihilation of apostates (28). And a further consequence will be a demonstration of the vanity of nature-worship and idolatry (29—31).

The chapter, entitled by Ewald ‘The Great Arraignment,’ stands worthily as the introduction to Isaiah’s prophecies. Its leading ideas—the breach between Jehovah and Israel, the inefficacy of mere ritual, the call to national repentance, the certainty of a sweeping judgment—are those which underlie not only Isaiah’s teaching, but also that of all the pre-Exilic prophets; and these elementary principles are here presented with a force and clearness unrivalled in the Old Testament. Certain resemblances, both in thought and expression, to the ‘Song of Moses’ (Deut. xxxii.) have been noted by commentators, but the inference that this discourse is in any sense an imitation of that poem is on every ground to be rejected. The passage is probably a summary of several public discourses; these, however, have been worked up into a literary unity, and there is perhaps a presumption that the original oracles belong to one and the same period of the prophet’s activity.

I have nourished and brought up children,
And they have rebelled against me.

What that period was cannot, however, be determined with certainty. Critical opinion seems to gravitate more and more to the view that the first part of the chapter (*vv.* 2—17) belongs to the time of Sennacherib's campaign (B.C. 701). This conclusion is based chiefly on the historical allusions in *vv.* 7—9. But it is not quite clear that the expressions there used might not apply to the Syro-Ephraimitish invasion of *circa* 735; and there are one or two general considerations which plead for the earlier date. (1) A presentation of fundamental prophetic ideas so fresh and powerful as this points to the beginning rather than the close of Isaiah's career. (2) It is difficult to read *the whole chapter* in the light of Sennacherib's invasion. It would be surprising if a series of discourses uttered during that crisis should contain only a pair of doubtful indications of their historical setting. It is admitted, moreover, that the allusions to idolatry (29 ff.) are more naturally understood of the reign of Ahaz than of that of Hezekiah, and no counter argument can fairly be drawn from the assiduous worship of Jehovah referred to in 10 ff. (3) The tone and teaching of the chapter closely resemble the prophecies uttered by Isaiah in the earliest portion of his public work (*ch.* ii.—v.). On the whole it seems not improbable that the passage is a *résumé* of the principal themes of Isaiah's early ministry, compiled shortly after the attack by Rezin and Pekah (see on *ch.* vii.). Fortunately the interpretation of the chapter is but little affected by the question of its date.

2, 3. The heart-rending complaint of Jehovah.

2. *the LORD hath spoken*] The inner ear of the prophet has heard the words which follow; he will utter them in trumpet-tones which shall cause all creation to hear and shudder. The apostrophe to the *heavens* and the *earth* has probably no other force than this (*cf.* Deut. xxxii. 1; Mic. vi. 1, 2; Jer. ii. 12), although Dillmann thinks they are appealed to as witnesses of all that has passed between the Lord and His people. The dramatic conception of a formal Assize, with Heaven and Earth for Assessors, the prophet for Herald, and so on, although a favourite one with commentators, is merely fanciful, and weakens the rhetorical effect of the passage.

nourished and brought up] The two expressions may be synonymous, as in *ch.* xxiii. 4; Ezek. xxxi. 4. More probably, however, the second means "set on high [among the nations]" (*cf.* R. V. marg.).

children] *sons*; the position of the word is emphatic. (Israel, the son of Jehovah, as Ex. iv. 22 f.; Deut. xiv. 1, xxxii. 5, 6, 18; Hos. xi. 1 ff.) The "sons" are not named here, attention being concentrated on the tragic fact that He who is Lord of all should know

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child."

have rebelled] The charge of rebellion in the mouth of Isaiah (only here and *v.* 28) would include three things: (1) the sin of idolatry, (2) breaches of the moral law, (3) rejection of his own prophetic message

- 3 The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass his master's crib:
But Israel doth not know,
My people doth not consider.
- 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,
A seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters:
They have forsaken the LORD,
They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger,
They are gone away backward.
- 5 Why should ye be stricken any more?
Ye will revolt more and more:
The whole head *is* sick, and the whole heart faint.

(cf. v. 4). It is possible that the occasion of this revelation may have been some particular incident of the kind last mentioned, such as e.g. the decision of Ahaz to call in the help of Assyria (ch. vii.), or Hezekiah's treaty with Egypt in 701 (cf. ch. xxx. 9—15).

3. Israel's ingratitude is rebuked by the instinctive fidelity of the dumb animals to their human benefactors (cf. Jer. viii. 7). *Ox* and *ass* are mentioned, not as the most stupid animals, but as the only thoroughly domesticated animals of the Hebrews,—lodged probably under the same roof as their owner and his family.

4—9. The prophet speaks.

4. *seed* (i.e. race or brood, consisting) of *evildoers*] Cf. Matt. iii. 7, "brood of vipers." The indef. art. should be omitted in this clause and the preceding.

children...corrupters] better: **sons that deal corruptly** (R.V.); lit. "that corrupt [sc. their way]" as Gen. vi. 12.

provoked...unto anger] R.V., rightly, **despised**.

Holy One of Israel] i.e. "the Holy One who is Israel's God." Holiness was the aspect of the divine nature impressed on Isaiah's mind in his inaugural vision, and this phrase, common in his writings and apparently coined by him, sums up his fundamental conception of God in relation to Israel (see Introd., p. lii, and on ch. vi. below).

they are gone away backward] A pregnant construction, to be rendered as in R.V.: **they are estranged [and gone] backward**. The words are wanting in the LXX.

5. *Why*] Many comm., following the Vulg., render "On what (sc. part of the body)." Their meaning is exactly expressed by the line of Ovid (cited by Gesenius), "*Vix habet in vobis iam nova plaga locum.*" The idea seems somewhat frigid, and hardly suits the clause immediately following. The translation "why" is thoroughly established by Hebrew usage, is supported by most ancient versions, and ought probably to be retained.

the whole head...heart] Not "every head" (in spite of the absence of the Hebr. art.). The commonwealth is conceived as a body, sorely wounded and sick unto death: afterwards its calamities are described literally (v. 7).

From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* 6
no soundness in it;

But wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores:

They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither
mollified with ointment.

Your country *is* desolate,

7

Your cities *are* burnt *with* fire:

Your land, strangers devour it in your presence,

And *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a 8
vineyard,

As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,

As a besieged city.

6. The state of the nation is indeed desperate; no remedial measures have yet been applied. In the simple surgery of Isaiah's time a wound was first **pressed** (to extrude suppurating matter), then **bandaged** and **softened with oil** (cf. Luke x. 34).

7. The situation here described (which was undoubtedly *present* at the time of utterance) is that of a land ravaged by foreign troops (*land* is "cultivated land"). It has been contended that the word *strangers* (foreigners) must refer to the Assyrians, and could not be used of the allied Syrians and Ephraimites. But there seems no good reason why an army mainly composed of Syrians should not be designated as "foreigners."

and it is desolate...strangers] Lit., "and a desolation like an overthrow of strangers." If the text is sound it must mean "is such an overthrow as might be expected at the hands of strangers" (the so-called *Kaph veritatis*). This is a weak sense; and hence Ewald's plausible emendation, "like the overthrow of Sodom," has been accepted by most subsequent writers. The word for "overthrow" never occurs elsewhere except in connexion with Sodom (ch. xiii. 19; Deut. xxix. 23; Jer. xlix. 18, l. 40; Am. iv. 11).

8. *daughter of Zion*] A gen. of apposition="the daughter, Zion." It is a personification either of the city or the population of Jerusalem, or both together. The capital is as yet spared, but its isolation in the midst of the devastated country suggests to the imagination of the prophet two homely and vivid pictures of forlorn and dreary solitariness: **like a booth in a vineyard, or a night-lodge in a cucumber field**. Such frail structures, consisting of four poles stuck in the ground, with cross-pieces supporting a couch and a slight roof or awning overhead, were erected for the watchers who guarded the fruit or crop from thieves and wild animals. (See Wetzstein's description in *Del. Comm. on Job*, Trans., vol. ii. p. 74, 2nd ed.)

as a besieged city] The exact sense is doubtful. Some render: "like a city under observation," others: "like a watch-tower."

An interesting parallel to the idea of the verse is furnished by

- 9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a
very small remnant,
We should have been as Sodom,
And we should have been like unto Gomorrah.
- 10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom;
Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Go-
morrah.

Sennacherib's boast (in 701) that he shut up Hezekiah in his capital "like a bird in a cage."

9. *the LORD of hosts*] In Hebr. *Yahveh Tsēbāōth*, a peculiarly solemn title of the God of Israel, specially common in the prophetic writings. On the different theories as to the origin of the expression, see the Note in Cheyne, *Comm.* i. pp. 11 ff. The simplest explanation of its origin is that which regards it as equivalent to "Jehovah (the God) of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam. xvii. 45; cf. Ex. vii. 4). It is true that this cannot be the precise sense in which the phrase is used by the prophets, since it is a fundamental conception with them that Jehovah is no longer on the side of the hosts of Israel. But just as Amos took the phrase "day of Jehovah" from the lips of the people (see below on ii. 12), and gave it an interpretation diametrically opposed to the popular one, so he may have done also with this expression. If this be the correct view, "God of battles" may approximately reproduce the sense in which it is used by the prophets: Jehovah is still the Lord of Hosts, although He has disowned those of Israel. Or, if a vaguer idea be preferred, we may adopt the *Kύριος παντοκράτωρ* (All-sovereign Lord) of the LXX. as sufficiently expressive.

a very small remnant] The adverbial phrase "very small" might (disregarding the accents) be taken with the following clause, which would then read "we might readily have been as Sodom, &c." (as in Gen. xxvi. 10; Ps. xciv. 17, cxix. 87). The word for remnant (*sarîd*) is only here used by Isaiah. He perhaps purposely avoids *shē'ār*, which he would have used in speaking of the ideal remnant that inherits the hope of the future.

10—17. "The false and the true way of seeking God's favour" (Dillmann). The threatening aspect of public affairs had probably led to an unwonted display of zeal in the performance of the Temple ritual. Although the underlying thought of the people is that the bond between them and their God is maintained by sacrifice, &c., there is no reason to suppose that they are here conceived as consciously entering this plea in arrest of judgment. It is not till v. 18 that Jehovah calls the nation to answer His indictment.—It is to be noted that in these verses there is a progression from the cruder and more external to the more spiritual expressions of religious homage: sacrifice, solemn assemblies, prayer. This shews that what the prophet repudiates is not cultus as such, but the unholy combination of ritual worship with immoral conduct.

10. *rulers of Sodom...people of Gomorrah*] Note the singularly

To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices ¹¹
unto me? saith the LORD:

I am full *of* the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat
of fed beasts;

And I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of
lambs, or of he goats.

When ye come to appear before me, ¹²

Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my
courts?

Bring no more vain oblations; incense *is* an abomina- ¹³
tion unto me;

effective transition from the last words of v. 9. The word for "ruler" is the same as the Arabic *kadi* (found again in iii. 6, xxii. 3) and means strictly "decider," i.e. judge.

law of our God] Parallel to *word of the LORD*, as in ii. 3. The reference is not to the Mosaic Law, but to the prophetic revelation which follows (cf. v. 24, viii. 16, xxx. 9). The word *Tôrāh* (primarily "direction," then "instruction" or "teaching") was perhaps originally employed of the oral directions given by the priests on points of ritual or ethics (see esp. Hag. ii. 11; Jer. ii. 8, viii. 8, xviii. 18; Ezek. vii. 26); but is frequently used of the prophetic teaching (Jer. xxxi. 33; Is. xlii. 4, &c.). It appears always to denote *religious* instruction, even in such cases as Prov. i. 8, iii. 1, xiii. 14, &c. Of the Mosaic Law, Deut. i. 5, iv. 8, and very often.

11. *sacrifices*] the general term for *animal* sacrifices; *burnt-offerings*, those entirely consumed on the altar; of the more ordinary kinds the deity received the *fat* and the *blood*.

I am full of] *am sated with*. The idea of sacrifice as the food of the gods seems to belong to the original conception of the rite, and lingered long in the popular consciousness even of Israel (Ps. l. 13). See Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 224 (Revised Ed.).

12. *to appear before me*] R.V. marg. (following one Hebr. MS.) suggests *to see my face*, which is grammatically easier. It is thought that here and elsewhere the traditional text has substituted the passive for the active so as to avoid the appearance of anthropomorphism. On either view the phrase is a technical one, denoting the act of worship in the sanctuary: Ex. xxiii. 15, 17, xxxiv. 20, 23; Deut. xvi. 16, xxxi. 11; 1 Sam. i. 22.

to tread] Better *to trample*; the idea of desecration is implied. This ending of the question seems weak: LXX. transfers the clause to the beginning of the next verse: "My courts ye shall no more trample; to bring oblations is vain, &c."

13. *oblations*] The word is technically used of the meal-offering, but may embrace sacrificial gifts of every description (Gen. iv. 4).

incense is an abomination] Or (according to the Hebrew accentuation), "it is abominable incense to me." The word "incense" meant originally the sacrificial smoke.

The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ;

It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth :

They are a trouble unto me ;

I am weary to bear *them*.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you :

Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear :

Your hands are full *of* blood.

16 Wash ye, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ;

17 Cease to do evil ; learn to do well ;

Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed,

Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

new moon and sabbath (R.V.). Cf. 1 Sam. xx. 5, 24 ; 2 Ki. iv. 23 ; Am. viii. 5 ; Hos. ii. 11 ; Num. xxviii. 11, &c. ; Ex. xx. 8 ; Gen. ii. 2, 3, &c. *assemblies* (lit. "calling together") is the word rendered "convocation" in the Pent. (see esp. Lev. xxiii.).

it is iniquity...meeting] Render as R.V. **I cannot away with** (endure) **iniquity and the solemn meeting** (festal gathering), i.e. the combination of the two. The construction is still harsh (but see a somewhat similar combination in 1 Sam. xv. 23). LXX. has "fasting and idleness"; apparently *çôm wê'âplâh*. The true reading may have been *çôm wa-'âçârâh*, "fasting and solemn assembly" (Joel i. 14, ii. 15).

solemn meeting] (= "throng," Jer. ix. 2), cf. 2 Ki. x. 20 ; Am. v. 21 ; Joel i. 14. A slightly different form is used in the Law for the great gathering on the last day of the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 36 ; Deut. xvi. 8, &c.). The original meaning of the word is probably "tempus clausum." (See Robertson Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, Revd. Ed. p. 456.)

14. *appointed feasts*] the stated festivals dependent on the season of the year ; see Gen. i. 14. *trouble* is literally **burden**.

15. *your hands* ("spread forth" in the attitude of prayer) *are full of blood*] a symbol of cruel wrongs perpetrated or tolerated, including the guilt of actual murder (v. 21).

16, 17. In opposition to this false service of God, Jehovah calls for moral reformation and enunciates the true conditions on which the restoration of His favour depends.

17. *relieve the oppressed*] E.V. seems here to follow the LXX. The Hebrew must be translated **set right the oppressor** (R.V. marg.)—restrain him within the bounds of justice.

fatherless...widow] those who have no natural protectors, and are

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: 18
 Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white
 as snow;
 Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as
 wool.
 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good 19
 of the land:
 But if ye refuse and rebel,
 Ye shall be devoured *with* the sword: 20
 For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

always exposed to wrong when the administration of justice is weak or corrupt (cf. v. 23; ch. x. 2). To defend such is specially the duty of the judge, but it is also an obligation lying on every one who has influence in the community. The prophet addresses his hearers ("rulers" and "people" v. 10) as members of the state; and his demand is that by "seeking judgment" they shall exercise the fundamental virtue of citizenship. The righteousness which he requires is social righteousness, *iustitia civilis*, a public life so ordered as to secure for each individual his personal rights. The prophets' passion for justice is always inspired by a deep sense of the value of the human personality in the sight of God.

18—20. Jehovah condescends to plead.

18. *let us reason together*] more accurately, **let us implead one another** (Acts xix. 38, A.V.). The idea is that of a legal process in which each party maintains his own case (see ch. xliii. 26). It is felt by some comm. that the legal figure is inconsistent with an absolute offer of forgiveness in the two clauses which follow. The difficulty would be obviated by the subtle and attractive rendering (proposed, but now withdrawn, by Cheyne) "let us bring our dispute to an end"; but this is unsupported by grammar or usage. The second member of each sentence might be taken as an indignant question, "If your sins are... shall they be white...?"—or as an ironical concession, "Though your sins be...let them be white...!" The idea of pardon, however, may be retained, provided it be understood as conditioned by the alternative of vv. 19, 20.

scarlet and *crimson* are really synonyms for one colour, properly "crimson." The dye in question was obtained from the dried and powdered bodies of an insect (*coccus ilicis*, in Hebr. *tôla'ath shānî* = "bright worm"). There is perhaps no other instance of red used as a general symbol for sin, though white is the natural emblem of innocence (Ps. li. 7).

20. *ye shall be devoured with the sword*] "Sword" is here taken as an acc. of instrument, a construction of more than doubtful validity in Hebr. A more idiomatic rendering is: **ye shall be made to eat the sword**. An exactly similar expression is used by the Arabs, although Hebr. analogies are wanting.

- 21 How is the faithful city become a harlot!
It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it;
 But now murderers.
- 22 Thy silver is become dross,
 Thy wine mixt with water:
- 23 Thy princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves:
 Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards:
 They judge not the fatherless,
 Neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.
- 24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the
 mighty One of Israel,

21 ff. The elegy (*qînāh*, distinguished by a peculiar rhythm and by the opening word *'ēkāh*, "how") is a frequent vehicle of prophetic utterance. This is the clearest instance in the genuine writings of Isaiah, and it is characteristic of the 'city prophet' (Cheyne), that the subject is not the nation but the idealised capital. Isaiah is in a good sense 'laudator temporis acti.' He laments the degeneracy of Jerusalem, looking back probably to the days of David, when it was the abode of judgment and righteousness.

21. *a harlot*] The idea conveyed is perhaps rather deterioration of character than infidelity to the marriage bond with Jehovah, an image not used by Isaiah (as by Hos.).

righteousness (*ṣēdeq*) is the principle of right action in individuals or the community; *judgment* (*mishpāt*) the embodiment of that principle in judicial decisions, use and wont, and the like. These qualities constituted the "faithfulness," trustworthiness, of the city.

22. *silver* and *wine* may refer to the great men of the city (v. 23) but more naturally to the "judgment" and "righteousness" of v. 21;—all that was best in her, purity of morals, excellence of character, &c. The word for *mixt* occurs only here. The phrase is usually illustrated by the Latin "castrare vinum," the verb being taken as connected with that for "circumcise."

wine] better: *choice drink*, found elsewhere only in Hos. iv. 18.

23. *Thy princes are rebellious*] In the Heb. a paronomasia, borrowed from Hos. ix. 15. The "princes" (*sārīm*) are the civil and military officials of the monarchical constitution, as distinguished from the *zēqēnīm* (sheikhs or elders) of the old tribal system. The charge brought against them is that as a class they are corrupted by systematic bribery. They are *companions of thieves*, conniving at extortion and receiving in return a share of the spoil. Hence the *fatherless* and *widows*, having no bribes to offer, can obtain no redress; they cannot even find access to the seat of judgment.

24. Such men are *adversaries* and *enemies* of Jehovah, thwarting His wishes and purposes for His people. *the Lord*] "the Master" or the **Sovereign**. The title, used absolutely as here (*hā-'Adōn*), is almost peculiar to Isaiah, and is used by him only in introducing a threat (ch. iii. 1, x. 16, 33, xix. 4; cf. Ex. xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23).

Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries,
 And avenge me of mine enemies :
 And I will turn my hand upon thee, 25
 And purely purge away thy dross,
 And take away all thy tin :
 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, 26
 And thy counsellors as at the beginning :
 Afterward thou shalt be called,
 The city of righteousness, the faithful city.
 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, 27
 And her converts with righteousness.

the mighty One of Israel] Israel's Strong One, a rare word in Hebr., first found in Gen. xlix. 24. See on ch. x. 13. *ease me*]
 Better : **appease myself**, and so again, **avenge myself**. By a bold anthropopathy the divine Being is compared to a man thirsting for vengeance.

25 resumes the first figure of v. 22, the judgment on Zion being likened to the smelting of impure ore. *turn* (or **bring back**)
my hand] not in mercy, but, as usual, in judgment.

purely] R.V. **thoroughly**, lit. "as with lye," i.e. potash, which was used as a flux to facilitate the separation of the metals. The grammar is still suspicious. Some, by transposing two consonants, obtain the sense "in the furnace."

26. The result will be the establishment of a pure administration in Jerusalem, as in the olden time, Zion once more worthy of her ancient name, **citadel of righteousness** (Cheyne), **faithful city**. The last expression, carrying us back to v. 21, marks the close of the elegy.

Two things are noteworthy in this passage. (1) The ideal is political. The salvation of Israel is secured when all public offices are filled with good men ("judges" and "counsellors"). (2) The ideal will be realised by a restoration of the best days of the past. In later prophecies Isaiah looks forward to a state of things far transcending anything that had been achieved in Israel's previous history. Such an anticipation as this is most naturally assigned to an early period of his career, before his eschatological conceptions had assumed a definite form.

27 describes the salutary and 28 the judicial aspect of the chastisement in more abstract terms than those hitherto employed. *her converts*]
 lit. "those in her who turn"; cf. "Remnant-shall-turn" in ch. vii. 3.

redeemed] A very rare word with Isaiah (only again in xxix. 22). It is doubtful whether the meaning is that she shall be redeemed from her own sins, or from the troubles they shall have brought upon her. So it is uncertain whether *judgment* and *righteousness* (cf. v. 21) are the virtues of the redeemed people, or the attributes of God manifested in the redemption. The former idea is most in accordance with Isaiah's use of the words, but the latter, which is common in the later parts of the book, undoubtedly gives the best sense in this connexion.

- 28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the
sinners *shall be* together,
And they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
- 29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have
desired,
And ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye
have chosen.
- 30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,
And as a garden that hath no water.
- 31 And the strong shall be as tow,
And the maker of it as a spark,
And they shall both burn together, and none shall
quench *them*.

28. *And the destruction...together*] Better as an exclamation: **But destruction of rebels and sinners together!** *Rebels, sinners, forsakers of Jehovah*, as in vv. 2—4.

29—31. The judgment will also bring about a purification of religion, by revealing the folly of trusting in other deities than Jehovah.

29. *they shall be ashamed*] Some MSS. and Ancient Versions have the second person, possibly a mere correction.

oaks] **terebinths**. These and the *gardens* are emblems not of luxury, but of nature-worship. On “gardens” as seats of heathenish cults, see lxx. 3, lxvi. 17. The worship of sacred trees and sacred wells (which were probably the *numina* of the gardens [Duhm], see v. 30) are two of the most widely diffused and persistent forms of nature-worship, and are not extinct in Syria at the present day.

30. To the nature worshippers themselves the falling leaf of the terebinth and the failure of the spring in the garden, would mean the decay of the divine life which was supposed to animate these objects. To Isaiah, who recognises no divine life in nature but that of Jehovah, they are simply appropriate images of the collapse of superstition.

31 refers probably (though not certainly) to idolatry in the strict sense of image-worship. *the strong*] Apparently “the powerful (opulent) man.” The word occurs only once again in Am. ii. 9.

and the maker of it] Render with R.V. **and his work**, i.e. either “his idol,” or “his unrighteous work.”

they shall both burn...quench them] The “work” is a spark and the worker like tinder. The idea is that the product of sin will become the means of the sinner’s destruction.

CH. II.—IV.

In these three chapters we seem to have one of the minor collections of Isaianic oracles from which the present book of Isaiah has been compiled (see Introd., p. lxxvii). That they once existed as a separate

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning 2 Judah and Jerusalem.

volume is strongly suggested by two circumstances. (a) The form of the superscription (ii. 1) as compared with that of ch. i. 1. The repetition of the full designation of the prophet, without any note of time or subject specially applicable to what follows, would seem to indicate that this heading was written independently of the general title in ch. i. (b) The artistic unity and completeness of the section as a whole confirms the impression of its original independence. It contains (1) an introduction (ii. 2—4), describing the future glory of Zion as the religious metropolis of the world; (2) a series of discourses in which the prophet assails the prevalent vices and evils of his own day, and announces the judgment about to fall on the nation (ii. 5 [6]—iv. 1); and (3) a conclusion (iv. 2—6), shewing how through judgment the ideal set forth at the outset shall be realised in the blessings reserved for those who *escape* the judgment. The enclosing of the oracles of judgment between two passages of Messianic import affords clear evidence of literary design: which is admitted even by critics who (see below) question the Isaianic authorship of the opening and closing sections.

With regard to the date little difference of opinion exists. At least the middle portion (ii. 6—iv. 1) is assigned with hardly a dissentient voice to the very earliest period of Isaiah's prophetic career. In ii. 6—22, the material prosperity attained under Uzziah still exists in undiminished splendour, and (since Isaiah did not receive his prophetic call till the year of that king's death) the passage is most naturally assigned to the succeeding reign, that of Jotham. Ch. iii. may have been written somewhat later. Its picture of anarchy may have been suggested by tendencies which Isaiah saw around him, caused by the removal of a strong hand from the helm; and at all events v. 12 applies to no king so well as to the weak and irresolute Ahaz. On the other hand, the absence of any explicit allusion to the Assyrians shews that the prophecies belong to the very beginning of the reign, prior to the events recorded in ch. vii. The whole passage is thus of great importance as a record of the impressions and ideas with which Isaiah entered on public life.

II. 1. On the scope of the heading see Introd. Note above.—*The word.....saw*] The combination of the verb "see" with the obj. "word" is not uncommon: Jer. xxxviii. 21; Hab. ii. 1; Am. i. 1; Mic. i. 1, and cf. Is. xiii. 1; Hab. i. 1 (*burden*). In such expressions both words have undergone a certain process of generalisation; "word" denoting the substance of the prophetic revelation, in whatever way received, and "see" (*hāzāh*) describing the spiritual intuition by which the prophet was enabled to apprehend it. (See on ch. i. 1.)

CH. II. 2—4. ZION THE CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION IN THE LATTER DAYS.

In this striking picture of the Messianic age the following features should be noticed:—(i) The preeminence, amongst the mountains of

- 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days,
That the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains,

the world, of Zion, the acknowledged seat of Jehovah's universal dominion (cf. Jer. iii. 17; Ps. ii. 6, cx. 2, &c., also Ez. xl. 2). (ii) The extension of the true religion is effected, not by conquest, but by the moral influence of Israel's theocratic institutions on surrounding peoples (cf. Is. lx. 3). The submission of the nations is spontaneous; they are filled with eager desire to learn the ways of Jehovah (comp. Zech. ii. 11, viii. 22). Hence (iii) the nations retain their political independence. They are not conceived as absorbed in the Jewish nationality or as incorporated in a world-empire. Jehovah, not Israel, rules the world, and He rules it by His word, not by the sword. (iv) The authority of Jehovah, appealed to in all international disputes, brings war to an end, and ushers in an era of universal peace.

The representation is ideal, yet it contains little to which the hope of the Church does not look forward as the issue of the Christian dispensation. The only traces of the limitations of the Old Testament standpoint spring from the idea of Zion as the earthly centre of Jehovah's sovereignty. Even this has been understood literally by many Christians. But it is more in accordance with the analogy of prophecy to regard it as one of those symbols of spiritual truth, which, although conceived realistically by the prophets, were destined to be fulfilled in ways that could not be perfectly revealed until the true nature of God's kingdom was disclosed by Christ.

The occurrence of this prophecy, with slight variations, in Mic. iv. 1—4, raises a difficult literary problem, for no one will now hold that the two prophets were independently inspired to utter identical words. Did Isaiah borrow from Micah or Micah from Isaiah, or both from some unknown earlier prophet? Against the first hypothesis it is pointed out that Micah's prophetic career had not begun till a time considerably later than the date of these chapters; hence if either prophet borrowed from the other the citation must be on the part of Micah. But against this it is urged that its position in Isaiah and the want of connexion with what follows mark it out as a quotation, and also that it is given by Micah in what appears to be the more original form. Hence the third alternative (originally propounded by Koppe in the last century) has been widely accepted by critics. On this view the utterance of an older prophet has been adopted by Isaiah and Micah as a "classic" and perhaps popular expression of the ideal to which they both looked forward. But a theory which is reached by a process of exhaustion cannot command much confidence, especially when the process is after all not exhaustive. The possibility of a later insertion in both places cannot be ignored, and a certain presumption in favour of Isaiah's authorship is furnished by resemblances both in matter and style to other passages in the book (xi. 1—8, xxxii. 1—8), (so Duhm). At the same time it cannot be denied that its connexion in the present passage is somewhat loose, and it must remain doubtful whether it was originally

And *shall be* exalted above the hills;
 And all nations shall flow unto it.
 And many people shall go and say,
 Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the
 LORD,

3

composed as the introduction to this group of prophecies or belongs to a later stage of Isaiah's life. The assertion that the conception presented would be unintelligible in the age of Isaiah may be disregarded. As Wellhausen remarks, the prediction is one that would be remarkable in any age; it is perhaps even less surprising from the pen of Isaiah than from that of a later prophet.

2. *And it shall come to pass*] This formula (so common in continuous discourse) nowhere else introduces a prophetic oration (Ez. xxxviii. 10 is not really an exception), and shews that the passage has been detached from its original context.

Better, *in the after-days* (Cheyne) or "latter days" (R.V.), lit. "in the sequel of the days." The phrase in itself denotes simply the (remote) future, and is so used in Gen. xlix. 1; Num. xxiv. 14; Deut. iv. 30; xxxi. 29. An exact Assyrian parallel to this use (*akhrat yumi*) is given by Cheyne and Delitzsch. By the prophets the expression is often specialised in an eschatological sense, as in Hos. iii. 5; Ez. xxxviii. 16 (cf. v. 8), and probably Jer. xlviii. 47, xlix. 39, where it means (as here) the final age of the world's history following the establishment of the kingdom of God. In Jer. xxiii. 20, xxx. 24, however, the vaguer sense is more probable.

the mountain of the LORD's house] the Temple mount, which is also the seat of the Messiah's government. The phrase occurs in the parallel passage in Micah, also in Mic. iii. 12 ("mount of the house"); 1 Macc. xvi. 20 ("mount of the temple"). In the next verse it is resolved into the two members of a parallelism: "mountain of Jehovah" and "house of the God of Jacob."

Better as R.V. *at the head of...* (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 22; Am. vi. 7); although the translation "as the chief of the mountains" would also be admissible (Davidson, *Synt.* § 101 R, 1 a.). A miraculous physical elevation of Zion may possibly be thought of (Ez. xl. 2; Zech. xiv. 10); but the idea (seriously entertained by some) that Zion is to be literally set on the top of the other hills is too grotesque to be attributed to any prophet, save under compulsion. In this passage a metaphorical exaltation, in respect of political and religious importance, seems to satisfy all the requirements both of syntax and exegesis (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 15 f.).

all (the) nations shall flow] Properly "shall stream," a verb only used figuratively of the movement of masses of men to great centres of intercourse like Babylon (Jer. xxxi. 12, li. 44). Instead of "all the nations" Micah has (in harmony with vv. 3 f.) simply "peoples," which probably preserves the original text. The universality of the true religion is in either case implied; and the bare suggestion is perhaps more effective than an explicit assertion would be.

3. The conflux of nations explained by the desire, everywhere

- To the house of the God of Jacob;
 And he will teach us of his ways,
 And we will walk in his paths:
 For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
 And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
 4 And he shall judge among the nations,
 And shall rebuke many people:
 And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
 And their spears into pruninghooks:
 Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
 Neither shall they learn war any more.
- 5 O house of Jacob, come ye,

expressed, to know and practise the ways of Jehovah. Cf. Zech. viii. 20, 21.

and he will teach us...and we will walk] Or **that He may teach us...and that we may walk**. The verb for "teach" is that from which the noun "*Tôrāh*" (i. 10) is derived; hence the instruction must be conceived as communicated through the agency of prophets like Isaiah.

of his ways] The preposition has a partitive sense (cf. Ps. xciv. 12): "somewhat of his ways"; each people receiving such direction as is adapted to its peculiar circumstances. The "ways" and "paths" of Jehovah, denoting the revealed principles and maxims of religion and ethics, are figures too frequent in the O.T. to need detailed references.

for out of Zion...Jerusalem] These may be either words of the prophet, looking into the future, or of the peoples themselves as they exhort one another to go up to Jerusalem. In the latter case the verbs should be rendered in the present tense.

the law] i.e. "*Tôrāh*." See on i. 10.

4. Jehovah's righteous judgment causes "wars to cease to the ends of the earth."

among the nations] Here again Micah's language is more indefinite: "many peoples"; "strong nations afar off."

rebuke] **arbitrate for**; or, as R.V. marg., "give decision concerning." Cf. Gen. xxxi. 37; Job ix. 33 ("umpire," R.V. marg.). The meaning of course is that disputes which would otherwise have been settled by the sword are referred to the just and impartial arbitrament of Jehovah, whose award is accepted as final.

they shall beat...pruninghooks] For the figure cf. Martial's "*falx ex ense*" (Ep. xiv. 34) and on the contrary Ovid (*Fast.* I. 699), "*sarcula cessabunt, versique in pila ligones*"; also Joel iii. 10. The word rendered "ploughshares" is found only in 1 Sam. xiii. 20 f. and in the parallels in Micah and Joel. Perhaps "mattock."

The cessation of war is a prominent idea in Messianic prophecy. See esp. Hos. ii. 18; Zech. ix. 10; and on Is. ix. 5 below.

And let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of 6
Jacob,

Because they be replenished from the east,

CH. II. 5—22. THE FALSE GLORY OF ISRAEL TO BE ANNIHILATED
BY THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH IN A DAY OF JUDGMENT.

The passage may be divided into three brief sections :—

i. (*vv.* 5—9). After a transition verse (5, see below), the prophet proceeds, in an impassioned appeal to Jehovah, to contrast the actual condition of His people with the ideal set forth in *vv.* 2—4. The city destined to be the source of light and truth to all nations is at present a receptacle for the darkest and most degrading errors of heathenism. Having surveyed the symptoms of apostasy and ungodly pride which are everywhere around him—foreign superstitions (6), display of wealth (7), confidence in military resources (7), idolatry (8)—he gives utterance to the conviction borne in upon his mind, that the sin of the nation is unpardonable (9). Then follows,

ii. (*vv.* 10—17). A powerful description of the physical convulsions which mark the great “Day of Jehovah.” The conception seems to combine the features of the earthquake with those of the thunderstorm; it is a judgment directed against all that is “high and lofty” (12); i.e. everything, whether in nature (13 f.) or in human civilisation (15 f.), which seems to lift its head against the majesty of Jehovah (11, 17).

iii. In *vv.* 18—21 the prophet returns to the subject of idolatry, describing the sudden despair and ignominious discomfiture “in that day” of all who put their trust in images. The last verse then sums up in general terms the lesson of the preceding prophecy.

5 is apparently a transition verse (cf. Mic. iv. 5), “Since this great destiny is ours, O House of Jacob, let us at least for ourselves rise to the height of our privileges. But how vain is the exhortation! (6) For Thou, Jehovah, hast rejected, &c.” Or, the prophet may be supposed to cut short abruptly a line of thought he meant to pursue, and to make a fresh start at v. 6. But neither of these views is convincing enough to remove the impression that *vv.* 2—4 are not the original introduction to 6 ff.

light of the LORD] Not the “light of His countenance” (as Ps. lxxxix. 15, xliv. 3), but of His Revelation (cf. Is. li. 4).

6—9. The prophet bears witness to Jehovah against Israel. It is very rarely that Isaiah thus addresses himself directly to God.

6. *Therefore thou hast forsaken*] *For thou hast rejected*—a strong word, used twice (Deut. xxxii. 15; Jer. xv. 6) of Israel's rejection of Jehovah, more frequently as here. This “rejection” is the counterpart of the “rebellion” of ch. i. 2.

replenished from the east] An old and plausible emendation (*mqs̄m* for *mqdm*) gives the sense “filled with sorcery.” Possibly both words were written (“with sorcery from the east”), one having been dropped in copying because

- And *are* soothsayers like the Philistines,
 And they please themselves in the children of strangers.
 7 Their land also is full *of* silver and gold,
 Neither *is there any* end of their treasures;
 Their land is also full *of* horses,
 Neither *is there any* end of their chariots:
 8 Their land also is full *of* idols;
 They worship the work of their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made:
 9 And the mean man boweth down,

of their resemblance. "The east" would include Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia, perhaps also Babylonia, "the classic land of magic."

soothsayers] It is not certain what particular form of divination is indicated by the name. Some take it as derived from the word for cloud; "cloud-compellers," i.e. rainmakers. On divination amongst "the Philistines" see 1 Sam. vi. 2; 2 Ki. i. 2. *please themselves in*] Lit. **strike hands with** (R.V.), i.e. "form alliances with." The expression is not found elsewhere, and the rendering is somewhat uncertain. Dillmann thinks that "children of strangers" must mean "foreign youths," who were in request as sorcerers, but the wider sense (= "strangers," simply) seems preferable. It is probably better (with Hitzig) to read *bîdê* ("with the hands of") instead of *bēyaldê* ("with the children of"), rendering simply: "join hands with strangers."

7. *Their land also is full...*] Lit. **and its** (the people's) **land has become filled** (and so throughout vv. 7, 8). *silver and gold...treasures*] The wealth of the country had increased enormously through commercial activity and the control of the Red Sea traffic (2 Kings xiv. 22) in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham. These "treasures" were partly expended in procuring "horses and chariots," as in the time of Solomon. The prophets condemn all such accumulation of earthly resources, as tending to lead the nation away from reliance on the help of Jehovah. Cf. Deut. xvii. 16, 17, xx. 1; Is. xxxi. 1; Mic. v. 10; Zech. ix. 10.

8. *idols*] Lit. "nonentities."—The word (*'ēlîlm*) is almost peculiar to Isaiah; and appears to contain a scornful play on the word for "gods" (*'ēlîm*). *work of their own hands*] The prophet refuses to distinguish, as a heathen might, between the false deity and his image; the latter alone has real existence. Cf. Hos. xiii. 2; Is. xl. 19 f., xli. 7; xliv. 12—20, &c.

9. *boweth down...humbleth himself*] If this be the right translation, the reference must be to the degradation of human dignity involved in idolatry and superstition, a thought not unworthy of Isaiah. It is more probable, however (see ch. v. 15), that the words refer to the judgment at hand, which is as certain as if it had already taken place. So R.V. **is bowed down...is brought low**. The verbs may be understood either in a reflexive or a passive sense.

And the great man humbleth himself;
Therefore forgive them not.

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, 10
For fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his
majesty.

The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, 11
And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every 12
one *that is* proud and lofty,

mean man...great man] In the original the contrast is expressed by two words for "man," corresponding to *homo* and *vir* in Latin, *Mensch* and *Mann* in German, &c. Sometimes, as here, the distinction is emphasised so as to mark a contrast (Ps. xlix. 2).

therefore forgive them not] Or, **and thou canst** (or wilt) **not forgive them**. The verbal form employed in the Heb. (jussive) properly expresses the will or desire of the speaker (as E.V.), but in negative sentences it "sometimes expresses merely the subjective feeling and sympathy of the speaker with the act" (Davidson, *Synt.* § 128, R. 2).

10, 11. It is doubtful whether these verses should be connected with what precedes or with what follows. Each is of the nature of a refrain verse: note the resemblances in 10, 19, 21 and in 11, 17. (In the LXX. v. 10 ends with "to terrify the earth," as 19, 21.) Although no strophic arrangement can be traced, the verses obviously express the keynote of this part of the discourse.

10. *Enter into the rock*] The clefts and caverns (see vv. 19, 21) which abounded in the limestone rock of Palestine were used as natural hiding-places in time of invasion (Jud. vi. 2; 1 Sam. xiii. 6, xiv. 11). Cf. the still more impressive representation, Hos. x. 8.

11. *in that day*] The day to be now described in

12—16. The conception, although in the highest degree poetic, is not allegorical. Trees, mountains, ships, &c. are not emblems of kings, magnates, commerce and the like; the destruction of all that is imposing and sublime in nature or art is itself the concrete expression of the idea that "the LORD alone shall be exalted." The appearing of Jehovah is depicted under the imagery of the thunderstorm, an ancient symbol of the Theophany (cf. Jud. v. 4 f.; Ps. xviii. 7—14, xxix.).

12. *For the day...proud...*] Render, **For Jehovah of Hosts hath a day upon all that is proud...** (see R.V. marg.). What the prophet asserts is that there *is* a "day of Jehovah," in the sense in which he has to announce it. From Am. v. 18 we learn that the phrase was already familiar to the people, but was understood in a sense favourable to themselves. How they arrived at the idea is not known. Probably the word "day" was interpreted as "day of battle," Jehovah's "day" being the day of His victory over the enemies of Israel (see Robertson

And upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

- 13 And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high
and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan,
14 And upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills that are lifted up,
15 And upon every high tower,
And upon every fenced wall,
16 And upon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all pleasant pictures.
17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men shall be made low:
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.
19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks,

Smith, *Proph. of Israel*, Revd. Ed. pp. 397 f.). From the time of Amos (if not earlier) the "day of the Lord" becomes a standing designation of the prophets for the final manifestation of Jehovah to judge Israel and the world. Here it is obviously a universal judgment that is predicted.

15, 16. Works of human art are last mentioned as being nearer to the sinful pride of man, which is the ultimate cause of the judgment.

16. *ships of Tarshish*] The largest class of merchant vessels then used. They were first built by the Phoenicians for the long voyage to Tartessus (Tarshish) in Spain; but the name (like our "Indiaman") was applied to large ships whatever their destination. Since the harbour of Elath was at this time in the possession of Judah the prophet may allude to fleets sailing thence to the East in the service of Jotham. More likely, however, he is thinking of the Phoenician argosies which he had seen in the Mediterranean. *pleasant pictures*] An obscure expression, found only here. The noun is thought to be derived from a verb meaning "to see," but this lends itself to a variety of senses. The rendering of A.V. seems to rest on the Vulg., "omne quod visu pulchrum est"; or perhaps like that of R.V. ("imagery") on the analogy of a cognate Heb. noun (Num. xxxiii. 52; Prov. xxv. 11); "watch-towers" (R.V. marg.) is based on the Peshito (see Cheyne, *Comm.* II. p. 137).

18—21. A special feature of the judgment will be the extinction of idolatry everywhere.

18. *And the idols...abolish*] Rather, and as for the idols—they shall completely pass away (cf. R.V.). If the text be right this is the sense. But the extreme shortness of the verse, together with some grammatical anomalies, suggest that the text may have suffered mutilation in the course of transmission.

19. *they shall go*] i.e., as R.V., men shall go.

And into the caves of the earth,
 For fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his
 majesty,
 When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.
 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and ²⁰
 his idols of gold,
 Which they made *each one* for himself to worship,
 To the moles and to the bats;
 To go into the cliffs of the rocks, 21
 And into the tops of the ragged rocks,
 For fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his
 majesty,
 When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: 22
 For wherein is he *to be* accounted of?

holes of the rocks...earth] Better: **caves of the rocks and into the holes of the dust** (R.V. and marg.; see on v. 10 above).

to shake terribly the earth] R.V. has "to shake mightily," but the strict rendering is **to terrify the earth**: a paronomasia in Heb., easily imitated in Latin, "ut terreat terram." There is an undoubted allusion to an earthquake. Isaiah must have experienced the great earthquake in the reign of Uzziah (Am. i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5); and the deep impression made on his youthful mind furnished him with a presentiment of the terror of the great day of Jehovah.

20. An expansion of the thought of v. 18. The verse is remarkable for the absence of parallelism.

which they made each one for himself] R.V. renders more faithfully, "which they made for him." Probably, however, the verb is an archaic singular wrongly pointed ('āsû, read 'āsav), the translation being: **which he made for himself**, cf. v. 8.

to the moles and to the bats] The sense is not doubtful, although an accidental division of the word for "moles" in the original (*lahpar-pârôth*) has misled some of the older interpreters.

21. See on vv. 10, 19. Translate: **to enter into the hollows of the rocks and clefts of the crags, &c.**

22. *whose breath...nostrils]* A translation both weak and ungrammatical, although retained in R.V. Render: **in whose nostrils is a breath**. The breath of the nostrils symbolises the divinely imparted principle of life in man (Gen. ii. 7); and the meaning of the clause is that man's life is frail and perishable as a breath (cf. Job vii. 7).

This verse is not found in the LXX., and is regarded by many as a later insertion in Isaiah's prophecy.

- 3 For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the
stay and the staff,

CH. III. 1—IV. 1. JUDGMENT ON THE RAPACITY AND LUXURY
OF THE UPPER CLASSES IN JUDAH.

The passage falls into two sections:—

i. vv. 1—15. A prediction of the impending dissolution of social order, due to the selfishness and tyranny of the ruling classes.

(1) Jehovah is about to remove all the existing pillars of the state, and hand over the land to the miseries of incompetent and capricious government (1—4). A state of anarchy will ensue, which will be felt to be intolerable even by those who have helped to bring it about. A graphic picture is presented of the futile efforts of the people to restore some semblance of authority (5—7).

(2) The reason of this visitation is next stated; the unblushing wickedness which prevails in the land has provoked the “eyes of Jehovah’s glory,” the chief guilt lying at the door of the court and the nobles (8—12). The section closes with a vision of judgment; Jehovah appears in person and sternly calls the authorities of His people to account for their abuse of the trust committed to them (13—15).

ii. iii. 16—iv. 1. The second section, which is perhaps somewhat fragmentary, is devoted to the fashionable women of the capital. It contains:—

(1) A diatribe against the frivolity and extravagance of the ladies of Jerusalem, combined with a threat of the degradation in store for them (16—24).

(2) A picture of the desolation of the city, bereft of her defenders, who have fallen in war (25, 26).

(3) A description of the effect of this disaster on the surviving women, who in the depletion of the male population will scarcely find husbands to take away their reproach (iv. 1).

Throughout the passage the prophet’s point of view is somewhat different from that occupied in ch. ii. 6 ff. There it is the religious aspect of the people’s sin that is emphasised: pride, idolatry, and reliance on worldly power; here it is dealt with in its social aspect, as misgovernment, cruelty, luxury, &c. Again, the judgment in ch. ii. is represented as an overpowering physical catastrophe; here it is conceived as a destruction of the invisible bonds of society and a setting loose of the unruly passions of men to prey upon each other. This vivid apprehension of the evils of anarchy is instructive as the earliest indication of the statesmanlike quality of Isaiah’s genius, and his profound sense of the value of good government as the primary condition of national well-being.

1 ff. The collapse of the social fabric is to be brought about by the removal of the classes that contribute to the order and stability of the state. The state of things described might be the effect either of war and captivity (cf. 2 Ki. xxiv. 14; Jer. xxiv. 1; xxix. 1) or of a political revolution. The former view is the more natural, but it should be

The whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,
The mighty *man*, and the man of war,
The judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the
ancient,
The captain of fifty, and the honourable *man*,
And the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the
eloquent orator.
And I will give children *to be* their princes,
And babes shall rule over them.

noted that in ch. ix. 8 ff. (addressed to North Israel, and nearly contemporary with this) a period of revolutionary anarchy *precedes* the crowning disaster of the Assyrian invasion.

1. *the Lord, the LORD of hosts*] as in i. 24 : **the Sovereign, Jehovah of Hosts.**

the stay and the staff] The second word is the fem. form of the first. The conjunction of similar-sounding words (like "bag and baggage" in English) frequently expresses exhaustiveness. The meaning is simply "every kind of prop." Cf. Nah. ii. 10; Zeph. i. 15.

the whole stay...water] This explanation is exceedingly unnatural in view of the enumeration which follows. The clause is probably a marginal gloss (readily suggested by such passages as Lev. xxvi. 26; Ez. iv. 16; Ps. cv. 16) which has crept into the text.

2, 3. A list of the officials and prominent persons who form the "props" of society. No clear principle of arrangement can be traced, although the titles tend to fall into pairs, and those in v. 3 are perhaps of less distinction than those in v. 2. The art. is better omitted throughout as in Heb.

2. *The mighty man, and the man of war*] **Hero and man of war.** The profession of arms naturally stands first, Judah being still a military power of some pretensions. In ancient times, moreover, civil and military leadership were hardly separate.

The *prophet* is the professional prophet, scarcely distinguishable from the *diviner* (wrongly rendered *prudent* in A.V.), with whom he is bracketed. The word for *ancient* is that usually translated **elder**.

3. *honourable man*] lit. "man of respect"; either one high in the king's favour (2 Ki. v. 1) or a man of good social standing, without official rank (Job xxii. 8).

cunning artificer] lit. "skilled in arts." It is disputed whether the arts in question are mechanical or magical; hence the alternative "charmer" in R.V. marg. At all events

eloquent orator should be **skilful enchanter** (R.V.).

4. The supreme power passing into the hands of weaklings, a Reign of Terror ensues among the people. The sudden change of speaker is very striking.

and babes...] Rather, **and Outrage shall rule over them.** The word rendered "babes" is really an abstract noun, occurring again only in ch. lxvi. 4 (A.V. "delusions"). It is derived from a verb

- 5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour:
The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient,
And the base against the honourable.
- 6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, *saying*,
Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler,
And *let* this ruin *be* under thy hand:
- 7 In that day shall he swear, saying,
I will not be a healer;
For in my house *is* neither bread nor clothing:
Make me not a ruler of the people.
- 8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen:
Because their tongue and their doings *are* against the LORD,

meaning "to outrage" or "to insult" (see Jud. xix. 25; 1 Sam. xxxi. 4; Jer. xxxviii. 19; Num. xxii. 29), and seems here to denote those personal affronts and outrages which invariably accompany social confusions. The rendering "capriciousness," preferred by many, does not suit lxvi. 4. Some take the word as adverbial acc. (see R.V. marg. "with childishness shall they rule"), others think the abstract is used for the concrete ("capricious youths"). But the translation given is perhaps the most forcible,—Outrage instead of Justice.

5. A general description of the state of anarchy; "the bonds of discipline and order are loosed, all authority disappears" (Dillmann).

6, 7. Frantic but unsuccessful efforts will be made to induce some one to undertake the task of maintaining order. v. 6 is the protasis, v. 7 the apodosis. Render: **When one man lays hold of another in his father's house: "Thou hast a cloak, thou shalt be a ruler for us," &c.** It is the election of a local justice (*kadi* ch. i. 10), not of a king or dictator, which is described; "not an isolated, but a frequently observed circumstance" (Cheyne). The choice of the people falls on a landed proprietor who has been fortunate enough to retain his ancestral estate (his "father's house"), and whose outer garment is a sufficient badge of respectability. On ruler see i. 10.

7. *swear*] better, **protest**, lit. "lift up (sc. his voice)."

healer] lit. "binder-up" (of the wounds of the state), see i. 6.

in my house...clothing] "I am as poor as any of you."

8, 9. The ruin so vividly depicted is to the prophet's mind as certain as if it had been already accomplished, because the moral condition of the country, and especially of its present rulers, is one that Jehovah cannot tolerate. The perfects in v. 8 are those of prophetic certainty.

8. *Jerusalem is ruined*] A reference to the "ruin," v. 6.

their tongue and their doings] In word and deed they defy Jehovah

To provoke the eyes of his glory.
The shew of their countenance doth witness against 9
them ;
And they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide *it* not.
Woe unto their soul ! for they have rewarded evil unto
themselves.
Say ye *to* the righteous, that *it shall be* well *with him* : 10
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
Woe unto the wicked ! *it shall be* ill *with him* : 11
For the reward of his hands shall be given him.
As for my people, children *are* their oppressors, 12
And women rule over them.
O my people, they which lead thee cause *thee* to err,

and *provoke the eyes of His glory*. Cf. Hab. i. 13, “ of too pure eyes to behold evil.”

9. *The shew of their countenance*] The safest translation is that of R.V. marg., **their respecting of persons**, i.e. their partiality in judgment. The familiar phrase “ respect persons ” (see Deut. i. 17, &c.) appears here in the nominal form, the usual infinitive being replaced by a verbal noun. It is not an objection to this view that such a charge only applies to a particular class. The prophet deals with the nation throughout as a political unity, and he knows that the whole people must suffer for the sins of the rulers.

they declare...hide it not] or, **they declare their sin**, like Sodom, **undisguisedly**. On the construction see Davidson, *Synt.* § 41, R. 3.

Woe unto their soul.....] or, **Woe to themselves for they have done themselves evil**. The injustice they have done to others witnesses against them and recoils on their own heads.

10, 11. The exclamation at the end of v. 9 leads to a statement of the universal law of divine retribution. The verses are thought by some to be interpolated, and even Dillmann admits that they fit but loosely into the context.

10. *Say ye to the righteous*] R.V. “ say ye of the righteous.” But with a slight change in the consonantal text we may read **Happy is the righteous ! for it is well [with him]**. The Heb. would then present an exact parallel to the beginning of the next verse.

12. The threat of v. 4 is already on the way to be fulfilled ; the conditions of anarchy are present in the childish character of the reigning monarch, Ahaz. Cf. Eccl. x. 16. The prophet's pity for the nation breaks out in the repeated exclamation, “ **My people !** ”

children are their oppressors, &c.] Rather, **his tyrant** (plural of majesty) **is a child and women rule over him** (i.e. the people) : the queen-mother and women of the harem attain an undue and dangerous influence under such a régime.

they which lead thee cause thee to err] **thy leaders are misleaders**,

And destroy the way of thy paths.

- 13 The LORD standeth *up* to plead,
And standeth to judge the people.
14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients
of his people, and the princes thereof:
For ye have eaten up the vineyard;
The spoil of the poor *is* in your houses.
15 What mean ye *that* ye beat my people to pieces,
And grind the faces of the poor?
Saith the Lord GOD of hosts.
16 Moreover the LORD saith,

an expression found again in ix. 16. The word for "lead" is that used in i. 17, "set right."

destroy] have swallowed up; according to others: "have confused." The meaning is that the landmarks of national righteousness have been effaced from the minds of the people by the conduct of its statesmen and guides.

13—15. A judgment scene, somewhat loosely connected with what has gone before, but expressing in another form the same sympathy with the oppressed which appears in v. 12. Jehovah, at once accuser and judge, comes to vindicate the cause of the poor against their oppressors.

13. The verse reads: Jehovah has stationed himself to plead, and is standing to judge peoples. Instead of "peoples" LXX. reads "his people" (cf. Deut. xxxii. 36), which is easier, since there is nothing to indicate that a world-judgment is contemplated. It is doubtful whether the word can denote the separate tribes of Israel. If the Heb. text be retained, the idea must be that of a general assize, in which Israel is judged first.

14. Those immediately arraigned are the "elders and princes," the authorities responsible for the national welfare.

for ye have eaten up] Rather, And you—ye have eaten up. The indignant remonstrance of Jehovah commences at this point. The image of the vineyard is fully explained in ch. v. 1—7. The point of the accusation here is that those who should have kept the vineyard from the intrusion of wild beasts have themselves devoured it.

the spoil...houses] the evidence of their sin.

15. The strongest metaphors are used to express the cruelty with which the poor are treated.

What mean ye that ye crush my people (Prov. xxii. 22), and grind the face of the afflicted as between two millstones, determined to wring the uttermost farthing from them. The expression does not occur elsewhere, but in its fierce energy it may be compared with Mic. iii. 2 and Am. ii. 7.

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
 And walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes,
 Walking and mincing *as* they go,
 And making a tinkling with their feet:
 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of ¹⁷
 the head of the daughters of Zion,
 And the LORD will discover their secret parts.
 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of ¹⁸
their tinkling ornaments *about their feet*,
 And *their* cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon,
 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, ¹⁹
 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the ²⁰
 headbands,

16—iv. 1. An oracle addressed to the women of Jerusalem. Like Amos (iv. 1—3) in Samaria, Isaiah sees in the luxury of these pampered ladies a measure of the extortions practised by their husbands (cf. also ch. xxxii. 9—12).

16, 17 are connected as protasis and apodosis.

16. *daughters of Zion*] The “haughtiness” of the daughters of Zion is displayed in their gestures as they walk abroad. They **walk with outstretched neck, and ogling with their eyes; tripping along they go, and tinkling with their feet.** The reference in the last words is to the jingling sound of the anklets (*v.* 18) and the short chain uniting them (*v.* 20); the latter also produced the tripping gait mentioned in the previous clause.

17. *smite with a scab*] In Heb. a single verb formed from the noun found in Lev. xiii. 2, 6 ff. (the law of leprosy).

18—23. A long and obscure inventory of articles of feminine attire, occurring “in a profusion which it is difficult to represent” (Cheyne). It is reassuring to be reminded by Dillmann that all these things (21 in number) were not necessarily worn at one time. It should also be noted that many of the ornaments specified were used as charms, as is the case with Eastern ornaments to the present day.

18. *tinkling ornaments about their feet*] **anklets**, see on *v.* 16, where the verb “tinkling” is a denominative from this word. *cauls...round tires like the moon*] Probably **the little suns** (others, “wreaths”) and **the little moons** (Jud. viii. 21, 26, R.V. “ornaments”). Both articles are said to be still worn by Arab women.

19. **The ear-drops** (Jud. viii. 26, R.V. “collars”) and **the arm-chains and the veils**—the last (the Arabian *raʿl*) is in two parts, one thrown back over the head from above the eyes, the other hanging down over the face.

20. **The tiaras** (Ex. xxxix. 28; Ez. xxiv. 17; Is. lxi. 3, 10 [R.V.]) and **the foot-chains** (see on *v.* 16; others, “bracelets,” as in 2 Sam. i. 10, a slightly different word), and **the girdles and the scent-bottles, and the amulets.**

- And the tablets, and the earrings,
 21 The rings, and nose jewels,
 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles,
 And the wimples, and the crisping pins,
 23 The glasses, and the fine linen,
 And the hoods, and the vails.
 24 And it shall come to pass, *that* instead of sweet smell
 there shall be stink;
 And instead of a girdle a rent;
 And instead of well set hair baldness;
 And instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth;
 And burning instead of beauty.
 25 Thy men shall fall by the sword,
 And thy mighty in the war.
 26 And her gates shall lament and mourn;
 And she *being* desolate shall sit upon the ground.
- 4 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one
 man, saying,

21. *rings*] seal-rings, worn on the finger.

nose jewels] Gen. xxiv. 47.

22. The festal garments (Zech. iii. 4) and the tunics and the
 shawls (Ruth iii. 15) and the purses (2 Ki. v. 23).

23. The mirrors (made of polished metal, see ch. viii. 1) and the
 shifts (Jud. xiv. 12 f.) and the turbans and the overalls (a kind of
 veil, Cant. v. 7).

24. A description of the degradation of the high-born women of
 Jerusalem, reduced to beggary and slavery. The verse would appear to
 connect better with v. 17 than with 18—23.

instead of...stink] R.V. *instead of sweet spices* (lit. "balsam")
 there shall be rottenness.

a rent] Render with R.V. *a rope*.

well set hair] artificial curls (Cheyne), lit. "turner's work."

baldness] the result of disease, v. 17, or, possibly, a sign of mourning.

a stomacher] an obscure word; perhaps *mantle*.

branding instead of beauty; branding the symbol of slavery.

25, 26. A poetic personification of Jerusalem, the mother city,
 mourning the loss of her sons and defenders.

25. The words for "men" and "mighty" (lit. "might") are
 poetical terms.

26. *her gates*] the places of rendezvous in Eastern cities. *lament*
and mourn] because they are now deserted. Cf. Lam. i. 4; Jer. xiv. 2.

and she, emptied, shall sit upon the ground] Cf. ch. xlvii. 1; Lam.
 ii. 10; Job ii. 13.

IV. 1. "A companion picture to iii. 6...the male population are in

We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel:
Only let us be called by thy name,
To take away our reproach.

search of a ruler; the women in search of a husband" (Weir, quoted by Cheyne). The verse, therefore, represents an episode in that scene of anarchy which has been the main burden of this prophecy.

let us be called...] **let thy name be named over us.** The wife bore the husband's name, but only, it would seem, in such designations as "Sarai, Abram's wife," Gen. xvi. 1, &c.

to take away...] **take thou away our reproach** (R.V.). The disgrace of being unmarried is meant (Jud. xi. 37 f.).

Grotius cites a touching parallel from Lucan (*Pharsal.* II. 342):—

da tantum nomen inane
Connubii: liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis
Marcia.

2—6. THE FINAL STATE OF ZION AND THE REDEEMED ISRAEL.

Beyond the great judgment there is revealed to the prophet a vision of the ideal religious community, blessed with an exuberant supernatural fertility imparted to the soil (*v.* 2), purified from sin (*vv.* 3, 4), and overshadowed by the protecting presence of Jehovah (*vv.* 5, 6). It is a picture of the glorious Messianic age which immediately follows the day of the Lord. Those who inherit its glories are the survivors of the catastrophe (*vv.* 2, 3). Although the section has no definite historical background, it is obviously written as the sequel to ch. ii. iii.; the allusion to the "daughters of Zion" (*v.* 4) would scarcely be intelligible apart from iii. 16 ff., and possibly the glory of nature mentioned in *v.* 2 may form an antithesis to the artificial glories of civilisation in ii. 7 ff. At the same time it is reasonable to suppose that the verses have only a literary connexion with the preceding oracles, and formed no part of Isaiah's spoken message in the time of Ahaz.

By some recent critics (Duhm, Hackmann, Cheyne) the passage is assigned to a later editor of Isaiah's prophecies, and even so cautious a scholar as Dillmann hesitates with regard to the last two verses. The objections are based chiefly on considerations of style, and on the alleged post-Exilic character of the ideas and the symbolism. It is true that some leading words (such as those rendered "branch," "create," "defence," "covert") do not occur elsewhere in genuine writings of Isaiah. The imagery also is of a more pronounced apocalyptic cast than we might expect from Isaiah, and the style seems somewhat laboured and cumbrous. But on the other hand the main ideas—the salvation of a remnant, purification through judgment, the regeneration of nature—can all be paralleled from Isaiah, and this fact must be allowed some weight in favour of his authorship.

2. The luxuriant vegetation of the Holy Land in the latter days will reflect glory on the inhabitants as a proof of Jehovah's signal favour—a frequent thought in Messianic prophecy: Am. ix. 13; Hos. ii. 21 f.;

- 2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful
and glorious,
And the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely
For them that are escaped of Israel.
- 3 And it shall come to pass, *that* he that is left in Zion,
And he that remaineth in Jerusalem,
Shall be called holy,
Even every one that is written among the living in
Jerusalem :
- 4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of
the daughters of Zion,

Is. xxx. 23; Jer. xxxi. 12; Ez. xxxiv. 26—30, xxxvi. 34 f.; Zech. ix. 16 f.; Mal. iii. 12; Joel iii. 18; and cf. Lev. xxvi. 3—5; Deut. xxviii. 3—5, 10—12. The verse has a close resemblance to ch. xxviii. 5.

the branch of the LORD] better, **the growth of Jehovah**, that which Jehovah causes to grow. The word occurs in the same sense in Gen. xix. 25 (A.V. "that which grew") and Is. lxi. 11 ("bud"). It stands in parallelism with **the fruit of the land** (not *earth*) in the next clause, and both expressions are to be understood quite literally. The reference to a personal Messiah is thus excluded by the context; for few will be prepared to apply *both* expressions to Christ, the former to His divine sonship and the latter to His human birth (although this view is defended by Delitzsch on the analogy of Ez. xvii. 5). It is true that *afterwards* the Heb. word for "growth" (*ṣemah*) came to be used as a title of the Messiah (Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12), but this usage rests on Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15, where the Messiah is described as a scion (*ṣemah*) of the Davidic house. Observe that it is an entirely different word which is translated "Branch" in Is. xi. 1.

beautiful and glorious...excellent and comely] better, **for beauty and glory...for a pride and a renown.**

to the escaped of Israel] those who have been spared in the day of the Lord's anger. Cf. ch. x. 20, xxxvii. 31.

3. The character of the escaped remnant. *They shall be called holy* ch. lx. 14, lxi. 6, lxii. 12. "Holiness" here includes the ideas of consecration to God, and inviolability (Jer. ii. 3) as well as of moral purity (v. 4).

written among the living] rather, **written for life**, i.e. not any chance survivor, but those who are predestined to life (cf. Acts xiii. 48). The figure is derived from the burgess rolls in which the name of every qualified citizen was to be found (cf. Neh. vii. 64); hence comes the idea of the "book of life" containing the names of all the true people of God; Ex. xxxii. 32 f.; Ps. lxix. 28; Dan. xii. 1; Lk. x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xx. 12, 15, xxii. 19 (and cf. "bundle of life," 1 Sam. xxv. 29). The transition from the secular to the religious sense may be seen in Ez. xiii. 9.

4. If (once) **Jehovah have washed, &c.** Although the order is

And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from
the midst thereof
By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.
And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place ⁵
of mount Zion,
And upon her assemblies,
A cloud and smoke by day,
And the shining of a flaming fire by night:
For upon all the glory *shall be* a defence.
And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the ⁶
daytime from the heat,
And for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm
and from rain.

unusual this verse must be taken as a conditional sentence depending on v. 3. *spirit of burning*] better, **spirit of extermination** (as in vi. 13; 1 Ki. xxii. 46, &c.). The medium of the judgment is the "Spirit," the divine energy, which is operative alike in the physical and in the moral sphere (cf. ch. xxxii. 15).

5, 6. The gracious presence of God becomes a visible fact to men's eyes, in the cloud of fire and smoke which overshadows and protects the new Jerusalem. The symbolism is drawn from the story of the Exodus and the tabernacle in the desert (Ex. xiii. 21 f., xl. 34—38, &c.).

5. *upon every dwelling place...*] rather, **over the whole (divine) habitation of Mount Zion**. The word is never used of *human* dwellings. It might be translated, "foundation"; in either case it is equivalent to "sanctuary."

her assemblies] **convocations**, worshipping assemblies, as in i. 13.

a cloud...night] better (disregarding the accents), **a cloud by day and smoke with the shining of a flaming fire by night**.

for upon all the glory...defence] A perplexing clause. A literal translation would be **for over every glory (should be) a canopy**. So rendered, the words express a general principle of ceremonial propriety: wherever there is "a glory" (as e.g. royal majesty), it must be provided with a suitable canopy. The clause may be a marginal gloss suggested to a reader by the first part of the verse. The word for "canopy" occurs only in Ps. xix. 5; Joel ii. 16 in the sense of "nuptial pavilion" (see Robertson Smith, *Marriage and Kinship in Early Arabia*, pp. 168f.). In post-biblical Hebrew it means (as here) "canopy" in general.

6. *a tabernacle*] **a pavilion** as in Ps. xviii. 11.

in the daytime] is omitted by the LXX.

for a place of refuge...rain] **for a refuge and shelter from storm and from rain**. The mention of these "lesser inconveniences" reads like an anticlimax. It is certainly difficult to think that Isaiah would have written so weak a conclusion to an important oracle. The passage may be fragmentary.

- 5 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

CH. V.

The chapter consists of three parts:—

- i. vv. 1—7. The ingratitude of Israel and its approaching rejection by Jehovah are set forth under the veil of a homely parable.
- ii. vv. 8—24. A series of six “Woes” directed against the prevalent vices and injustice of the upper classes and leaders of the state.
- iii. vv. 25—30. Isaiah’s first description of the Assyrian invaders, the agents of Jehovah’s chastisement, already appearing on the horizon of the prophet’s vision.

There are strong reasons for thinking that iii. formed originally the peroration of a different prophecy, entirely independent of vv. 1—24 (see below). i. and ii., on the other hand, form a connected whole to which v. 24 forms a suitable and well-marked conclusion. Although they may not have formed parts of a single spoken address, there are no grounds for supposing that they ever existed separately in writing.

To what date is this passage (vv. 1—24) to be ascribed? By the consent of nearly all critics, it belongs to the first period of Isaiah’s career, but beyond this it is impossible to speak very definitely. A comparison with ch. ii.—iv., however, suggests that the prophet has now acquired a more intimate knowledge of the state of society in Jerusalem, and is able to lay a firmer hand on the evils of his time. We shall probably not go far wrong if we assign the prophecy to a slightly later date than the preceding chapters.

1—7. THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD AND ITS APPLICATION.

One of the finest exhibitions of rhetorical skill and power which the book contains. The prophet appears in the guise of a minstrel before an assemblage of his countrymen, and proceeds to recite the unfortunate experience of a “friend” of his with his vineyard. The simple story, told in light popular verse, disarms the suspicions of the crowd, and the singer, having secured their sympathy, demands a verdict on the course which a man might be expected to pursue with so refractory a vineyard as this (v. 3). The answer was so obvious that the people, like our Lord’s hearers on a similar occasion (Matt. xxi. 41), had practically assented to their own condemnation before they clearly perceived the drift of the discourse. But from this point onwards the parable becomes more and more transparent, till at last the prophet, with a sudden change of rhythm (see on v. 6), throws off all disguise and drives home the lesson of the whole in the crashing lines of v. 7.

The idea of Israel as the Lord’s vineyard probably originated with Isaiah. (Cf. ch. iii. 14, xxvii. 2 ff.; Jer. ii. 21, xii. 10 f.; Ps. lxxx. 8 ff.; Matt. xx. 1 ff., xxi. 33 ff. and parallels.)

1. (Four lines.) The first half of the verse contains the preamble, the second is the commencement of the poem.

My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill :
 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, ²
 And planted it *with* the choicest vine,
 And built a tower in the midst of it,
 And also made a winepress therein :
 And he looked that *it* should bring forth grapes,
 And it brought forth wild grapes.
 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of ³
 Judah,

Now will I sing...vineyard] Translate :—

I would sing of my Friend,

My Friend's song about his vineyard.

The A. V. has the merit, however, of distinguishing the two closely related words used for friend ("wellbeloved" and "beloved"). The difference probably has only a metrical value. Isaiah does not mean as yet to excite curiosity as to who the "Friend" is, only he cannot, even in a parable, divest himself of the consciousness that he represents the interests of Another.

A vineyard had my Friend

On a fertile peak.

a very fruitful hill] lit. "a horn, the son of fatness." "Apertos Bacchus amat colles" (Verg. *Georg.* II. 113). The land of Palestine is no doubt meant, but it is a mistake to allegorise the details of the imagery. This use of the word "horn" for "hill" is not found elsewhere in the O. T., but has many parallels in Arabic as well as other languages (cf. "Schreckhorn," &c.). It is chosen here for the sake of the assonance with the word for "vineyard."

2. (Six lines.) The situation was all that could be desired : and *labour* had not been spared. Note the resemblances in Matt. xxi. 33 ff.; Mk. xii. 1 ff.

fenced it] *digged it* (R.V. marg.). The word is not found elsewhere, but the meaning is certain.

gathered out the stones thereof] In Heb. a single word : lit. "stoned it" (ch. lxii. 10). The phrase "stone a field," for "clear it of stones," is said to be common in some parts of England.

the choicest vine] A technical name (collective) for the finest sort of grapes grown in Syria. The word occurs again in Jer. ii. 21; the corresponding noun of unity (fem.) in Gen. xlix. 11.

built a tower] for the watchers; not a mere hut, as in i. 8.

and also...winepress] *yea, and hewed out a winefat* (ὀπολήνιον, Mk. xii. 1). The *yegeb* is the receptacle (here cut out of the rock) into which the juice flows from the winepress (*gath*). (Cf. Joel iii. 13; Prov. iii. 10; Neh. xiii. 15, &c.) The emphasis on this clause calls attention to the owner's confident expectation of a return for his outlay.

brought forth wild grapes] Cf. Jer. ii. 21.

3. (Four lines.) The beginning of a new stanza is marked by the "And now" as in v. 5.

- Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.
 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard,
 That I have not done in it?
 Wherefore, when I looked that *it* should bring forth
 grapes,
 Brought it forth wild grapes?
 5 And now go to, I will tell you what *I will* do to my
 vineyard:
 I *will* take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be
 eaten up;
 And break down the wall thereof, and it shall be
 trodden down:
 6 And I will lay it waste:
 It shall not be pruned, nor digged;
 But there shall come up briars and thorns:

betwixt me and my vineyard] The change of person here is the first hint of a deeper meaning under the words of the song.

4. (Four lines.) The case for the owner of the vineyard.

What could have been done] lit. **What more is there to do** (cf. 2 Ki. iv. 13).

wherefore, when I looked.....wild grapes] Lit. **why did I look that it should...and it brought forth wild grapes.** The co-ordination of clauses assimilates the ending of the second stanza to that of the first. (For other examples of the same order, see Davidson, *Synt.* § 126, R. 4.)

5, 6. The hearers are silent, and the prophet proceeds to pass sentence on the vineyard.

And now, let me tell you, I pray,
 What I am about to do to my vineyard.

The construction in the second line is the *fut. instans*; the owner's mind is finally made up.

5. *I will take away...and break down*] better simply, **Remove...Break down**—absolute infs. in apposition to “what.” The vineyard is provided both with a **hedge** (of thorns) and a **wall** (of stone).

6. *lay it waste*] or, **make an end of it.** The word is thought to be connected with that rendered “desolate” in ch. vii. 19,—better “precipitous,” “cut off,” hence (as here) “made an end of.”

there shall come up...thorns] The Heb. is more forcible: **it shall go up in thorns and thistles.** “Thorns and thistles,” a phrase peculiar to the book of Isaiah: vii. 23, 24, 25, ix. 18, x. 17, xxvii. 4. The change of rhythm referred to (Introd. Note above) commences with this clause—rightly, since the next line reveals the whole drift of the parable: He who can *command the clouds* must be no other than Jehovah himself.

I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel,

And the men of Judah his pleasant plant :

And he looked for judgment, but behold oppression ;

For righteousness, but behold a cry.

Woe unto them that join house to house,

8

7. The formal application of the parable, emphasising two facts : (1) Jehovah's vineyard is the *house of Israel*, but especially the *men of Judah*, the plant of his delight (R.V. marg.) ; (2) "the wild grapes" it produces are the frightful oppressions and perversion of justice which are perpetrated in its midst. The underlying thought is that Jehovah's signal care and goodness ought to have resulted in a national life corresponding to His moral character—a fundamental truth of the prophetic theology.

He looked for judgment (*mishpāt*), but behold bloodshed (*mispāh*) ;

For righteousness (*ṣēdāqāh*), but behold a cry ! (*ṣē'āqāh*).

These powerful assonances, which cannot be reproduced in English, are evidently designed to clinch the moral of the parable in the memories of the hearers. The "cry" is that of the oppressed, cf. Job xix. 7.

8—24. DENUNCIATION OF THE SOCIAL EVILS WHICH CALL DOWN GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE NATION.

The indictment contains six counts, each introduced by the word "Woe," and is addressed exclusively to the upper classes, although the punishment of their sin falls on the nation as a whole. The prophet sets before us a vivid picture of a debased aristocracy, in whom public virtue has been eaten out by avarice and sensuality ; and he traces with remarkable insight the effect of these sins in the religious insensibility and perversion of the moral sentiments which characterised the nobles of Judah at this time.

8—10. The first woe, against the absorption of small properties by the wealthy landowners. Cruel evictions, by which the smaller peasant proprietors lost not only their homes but the rights of citizenship, were common in the age of Isaiah, both in Judah and Israel. Cf. Mic. ii. 2, 9 ; Am. ii. 6 f. "The old Israelite state was so entirely based on the participation of every freeman in the common soil, and so little recognised the mere possession of capital, that men were in danger of losing civil rights along with house and fields, and becoming mere hirelings or even slaves" (Duhm). An instance of the tenacity with which the Hebrew yeoman clung to his land may be seen in 1 Kings xxi. For legal checks to this evil, see Lev. xxv. 8 ff. ; Num. xxvii. 1—11, xxxvi. ; Deut. xxvii. 17.

*That lay field to field, till there be no place,
That they may be placed alone in the midst of the
earth!*

- 9 In mine ears *said* the LORD of hosts,
Of a truth many houses shall be desolate,
Even great and fair, without inhabitant.
- 10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,
And the seed of a homer shall yield an ephah.
- 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that*
they may follow strong drink;
That continue until night, *till* wine inflame them!
- 12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe,
And wine, are *in* their feasts:
But they regard not the work of the LORD,
Neither consider the operation of his hands.

8. *that they may be...earth*] Render with R.V., **and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land**; i.e. so that only the few have residential rights.

9, 10. The divine judgment on this evil. Cf. Am. v. 11.

9. *In mine ears said the LORD of hosts*] The verb is to be supplied as in xxii. 14: **In my ears (hath revealed himself) Jehovah....** It is a prophetic "audition"; the words which follow seem actually to sound in his ears. The great houses shall be uninhabited, because—

10. The land shall be smitten with the curse of barrenness; Jehovah's remedy for land-grabbing.

ten acres] lit. **ten yoke**; a yoke of land being

"As much as two stout oxen
Could plough from morn till night."

one bath] (of wine),—about 8 gallons.

seed of a homer...ephah] The *ephah* is a dry measure of the same capacity as the *bath*; the *homer* is ten *ephahs* (Ez. xlv. 11).

11—17. The second woe, against dissipation and the spiritual blindness which accompanies it. Cf. xxviii. 1, 7 ff.

11. *rise up early*] Drinking in the morning was considered disreputable by the Jews (Eccl. x. 16 f.; Acts ii. 15) and Romans; but not, apparently, by the Arabs (Gesenius). The word for *strong drink* seems to be a general name for various kinds of alcoholic liquors obtained from dates, honey, raisins, barley, &c.

that continue...inflame them] rather, **that sit late into the night, wine inflaming them.**

12. Cf. Am. vi. 5, 6.

And the harp...feasts] better, **And guitar and harp, tambourine and flute, and wine constitute their banquet**;—as if to drown the voice of conscience and destroy the sense of Jehovah's presence and working in their midst.

the work of the LORD...the operation of his hands] i.e. the crowning

Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because ¹³
they have no knowledge:

And their honourable men *are* famished,
 And their multitude dried up with thirst.

Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, ¹⁴
 And opened her mouth without measure :

And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp,
 And he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

And the mean man shall be brought down, ¹⁵
 And the mighty man shall be humbled,

And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled :

But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, ¹⁶

work of judgment which he is about to execute, and of which there were many ominous warnings for those who could discern the signs of the times: "opus aliquod illustre futurum...quod Deus hoc ipso tempore iam moliebatur" (Vitr.). Cf. *v.* 19, ch. x. 12, xxviii. 21; Ps. xxviii. 5. A similar thought is expressed in Am. vi. 6, where the luxurious nobles are charged with insensibility to the "ruin of Joseph."

13. Therefore (because its leaders are so blind) **my people goeth into captivity** (proph. perf.). This is the only explicit mention of exile in Isaiah. Cf. again Am. vi. 7. The next words may be rendered either **from lack of knowledge** (R.V.) or **without knowing it**—"unawares" (Cheyne). The former gives the better sense (cf. Hos. iv. 6).

their honourable men...their multitude] lit. "its glory"... "its tumult." The contrast, however, is rightly indicated by A.V.—the *noblesse* over against the populace. *famished*] Hebr. "men of hunger."

But the word for "men" is poetic (iii. 25) and never found in such phrases as this. The ancient versions, with a different vocalisation, read "dead with hunger," which is obviously too strong. Most commentators now follow Ewald and Hitzig, and alter the text in accordance with Deut. xxxii. 24 (R.V. "wasted"), reading "sucked out (exhausted) with hunger." This involves the change of a single letter, and yields a suitable parallelism to "dried up with thirst."

14—17. A second threatening, in a sublime image, of the sudden destruction of Jerusalem. The transition to the fate of the capital is somewhat abrupt.

14. *hell hath enlarged herself*] better, **Sheol hath enlarged her appetite** (Hab. ii. 5). Sheol, the Underworld, the realm of the dead (like the Greek Hades), is here, as elsewhere, conceived as a devouring insatiable monster; cf. Hos. xiii. 14; Jon. ii. 2; Cant. viii. 6; Prov. i. 12, xxx. 16.

and their glory...descend into it] Render (nearly as Cheyne) **and down goes her (Jerusalem's) pomp, and her tumult and her uproar and (all) that is (so) jubilant in her.**

15, 16. A reminiscence of the refrain in ch. ii. 9, 11, 17; but with significant modifications. These verses seem to interrupt the connexion of *v.* 17 with *v.* 14, and are either parenthetical or interpolated.

And God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner,
And the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,
And sin as it were with a cart rope:

19 That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work,
That we may see *it*:
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw
nigh and come,
That we may know *it*.

20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

16. *God that is holy...*] the Holy God sanctifies Himself through righteousness. God "sanctifies Himself," i.e. compels the recognition of His divinity, by the righteous judgments in which He reveals His true nature as the Holy One of Israel (cf. xxix. 23).

17. The obverse of the picture in v. 14. The city, with all its tumult and gaiety, has vanished into the underworld, and now flocks are seen grazing amidst the ruins,—an image of awful desolation rather than of "idyllic peace."

Then shall the lambs...manner] And lambs shall graze as in their pasture (R.V.). *strangers*] sojourners—perhaps "nomadic shepherds." But the reading of the LXX. (*ἀρνες*=lambs) can be explained by a slight change in the text and is on some grounds to be preferred.

18, 19. The third woe, against the mocking scepticism which leads men to harden themselves in sin. The men addressed do not believe in the prophet's threats of a day of retribution, yet all the while they are unconsciously doing their utmost to bring about their fulfilment.

18. The figure seems to express two ideas: (1) the determination with which these men set themselves to work iniquity, and (2) the inevitable connexion between sin and judgment. The idea of punishment is included in the words *iniquity* (or "guilt") and *sin*.

19. An impious challenge to Jehovah to make good His words spoken through the prophet. This defiant unbelief seems to have been the reigning spirit in the political circles of Isaiah's time; xxviii. 14 f., 22; cf. Jer. v. 12, xvii. 15.

20. The fourth woe, against those who confuse moral distinctions.

Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, 21
 And prudent in their own sight!
 Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, 22
 And men of strength to mingle strong drink:
 Which justify the wicked for reward, 23
 And take away the righteousness of the righteous from
 him.

Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, 24
 And the flame consumeth the chaff,
 So their root shall be as rottenness,
 And their blossom shall go up as dust:

Amongst the "wise men" of the time (Prov. xxv. 1) there may have been a class of sophists, who employed their subtlety in making out a case for abuses condemned by the unsophisticated moral sense.

21. The fifth woe, against the self-satisfied astuteness of the politicians. That the prophet has the statesmen in his eye is probable from such passages as xxviii. 9 f., xxix. 14 f., xxx. 1, 10 f., xxxi. 1 f.

22, 23. The sixth woe, against dissolute and corrupt judges. In vv. 11 f. drunkenness was denounced as destructive of all serious thought; here it is spoken of as the parent of injustice on the bench. Cf. Prov. xxxi. 4 f.

22. *them that are mighty*] **heroes.**
to mingle strong drink] This was a delicate operation, almost a fine art, demanding a refined taste and much experience (Prov. xxiii. 30). The phrase does not mean to dilute with water, which was common among Greeks and Romans, but rather to enhance by the addition of aromatic herbs (cf. "spiced wine" in Cant. viii. 2).

23. These valiant drinkers are weak enough in their official capacity; they acquit the guilty and condemn the innocent. *justify the wicked*] "wicked" and "righteous" are here used in their forensic sense: "he who is in the wrong" and "he who is in the right" (cf. Ex. ix. 27). So "take away the righteousness" means "declare guilty"—the opposite of "justify."

24. The conclusion. Render with R.V.

**Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
 And as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, &c.**

The similes are taken from two common customs, the burning of the stubble in the fields, and the use of dry grass for fuel. The comparison is completed in a different figure.

root...blossom] The expression is found on a Phœnician sarcophagus (Eshmunazar), "let him not have root below or fruit above"; and frequently in the O.T., Is. xiv. 29, xxxvii. 31; Am. ii. 9; Hos. ix. 16, &c.

Because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts,

And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people,

the law of the LORD of hosts] See on i. 10. The last clause is a summary description of the sins of the nation; the source from which they all spring is the rejection of the prophetic message.

25—30. A WARLIKE NATION, SUMMONED FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, IS THE DESTINED INSTRUMENT OF ISRAEL'S FINAL CHASTISEMENT.

That the Assyrians are here alluded to is certain both from the explicit statements of later prophecies, and from the terms of the description itself. It speaks of the foe as characterised by the rapidity of his movements, the perfection of his discipline and military equipment, his love of conquest, and his irresistible might. These features are no doubt highly idealised (as was natural in a first sketch), but it is clear that some particular nation is meant, and we can have no hesitation in saying that the reference is to the most perfect military machine that then existed, the Assyrian army.

Although the passage might be explained fairly enough as the continuation of v. 24, it gains immensely in significance when read as the final strophe of the prophecy in ch. ix. 8—x. 4, a position to which several considerations lead us to assign it. (1) The latter part of v. 25 occurs as a *refrain* in ix. 12, 17, 21 and x. 4. It is found nowhere else and its isolated occurrence in v. 25 distinctly weakens the force of v. 24. (2) The four equal strophes of ix. 8—x. 4 correspond very nearly in length with vv. 26—30. (3) After reading x. 4, we feel that the last word has not been spoken: the hand is still outstretched, we wait to hear of the final blow. The verses before us supply the appropriate climax. On the other hand, they are not necessary where they stand, v. 24 affording a satisfactory conclusion. The hypothesis, to be sure, does not remove every difficulty. It is vain to speculate as to the reasons which may have led to the transference; although it might have been suggested by the appositeness of the passage as a reply to the challenge of v. 19. Further, v. 25 is far too short for a complete strophe, and therefore can hardly have followed *immediately* on x. 4. We must suppose that some verses have been omitted in the process of transference, as irrelevant in their new context.

25. *Therefore]* The Hebr. word differs from that in vv. 13, 14, 24, and agrees with that in ix. 17. The following tenses are perfects (or consec. impf.) usually taken as prophetic perf.; but this is scarcely natural. Past judgments are probably referred to (see on ix. 8 ff.). Some think of a pestilence (Am. iv. 10), pestilence being preeminently the stroke of God (*he hath smitten them*); others (from the next clause) of an earthquake. Both may be meant.

And he hath stretched forth his hand against them,
and hath smitten them:

And the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were
torn in the midst of the streets.

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand *is* stretched out still.

And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, 26
And will hiss unto them from the end of the earth:

And behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:
None *shall be* weary nor stumble amongst them; 27

None shall slumber nor sleep;

Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed,
Nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

Whose arrows *are* sharp, and all their bows bent, 28
Their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint,

And their wheels like a whirlwind:
Their roaring *shall be* like a lion, 29

their carcasses were torn] rather, *were as offal*, a very common figure (2 Ki. ix. 37; Jer. xvi. 4, xxv. 33; Zeph. i. 17; Ps. lxxxiii. 10).

For all this...] See on ch. ix. 12.

26—29. A powerful description of the advance of the invaders, who however remain unnamed.

26. *And he will lift up an ensign*] i.e. a signal, set up on a hill (xiii. 2, xviii. 3, xxx. 17; cf. xi. 10, 12) as a point of rendezvous. (Mark the significant change to the future tense.) *the nations from far*] better, *a nation from afar* (cf. Am. vi. 14). The singular is demanded by what follows, and is obtained by removing the last letter of one word to the beginning of the next, exactly as in Jer. v. 15. *will hiss*] as in ch. vii. 18; Zech. x. 8. The image is that of a bee-keeper alluring the swarm.

with speed swiftly] because it is Jehovah who calls. "They" should be "he," to the end of the chapter, the nation being individualised.

27. Their accoutrement is perfect down to the smallest detail.

28. *bows bent*] which was done only for immediate action. *his horses' hoofs...flint*] Therefore he will not shrink from riding them on the rocky soil of Palestine, which was extremely unfavourable to the use of horses (Am. vi. 12). Similar allusions are frequent in ancient literature (κρατερώνυχες ἵπποι), the shoeing of horses being unknown in antiquity. The bows and arrows, cavalry and chariots, are all characteristic of the Assyrians.

29. *Their roaring...*] Or, *he has a roar like that of a lioness, he roars like young lions and growls seizing the prey, &c.* Two words are here used of the lion's roar, the first is perhaps that uttered as he

They shall roar like young lions :
 Yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey,
 And shall carry *it* away safe, and none shall deliver *it*.
 30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the
 roaring of the sea :
 And if *one* look unto the land, behold darkness *and*
 sorrow,
 And the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

searches for prey, the second the low growl with which he springs on his victim.

30. Apparently an image of the land in the throes of the invasion. The verse, which presents many difficulties, may read somewhat as follows: **And he shall growl over him in that day like the growling of the sea, and if one look to the earth, behold darkness of distress (and the light is dark) in its clouds.** The text is probably in some disorder. The words in brackets are wanting in the LXX. The first clause is generally interpreted of the growl of the invader over the prostrate land; some, however, understand it of the voice of Jehovah (the thunder) moving overhead and directing the attack. The latter part of the verse has a general resemblance to viii. 22; the words "look to the earth" seem to require some such antithesis as "look up" in viii. 21.

in the heavens thereof] The word is not elsewhere used and is of uncertain meaning.

CH. VI.

ISAIAH'S INAUGURAL VISION.

It is now universally acknowledged that this chapter records Isaiah's initiation into the office of a prophet. The opinion of many older commentators that it represents a renewal or recovery of the prophetic consciousness after several years of public activity, was based on the erroneous assumption that the order of the book is in the main chronological and that the previous chapters contain prophecies from the reign of Uzziah (see also on v. 5, below). Everything in the narrative itself suggests that it is an inaugural vision, a record of the experience by which Isaiah was made a prophet. The consciousness of standing in a peculiar relation to God, of personal reconciliation to Him, of being in His council, and bearing a definite commission straight from Himself, dates from the moment when in an ecstasy he "saw the Lord." The vision is undoubtedly an actual experience, not the mere embodiment of an idea; it occurred in the death-year of Uzziah, as the prophet, looking back after some lapse of time, distinctly recalls. Then Isaiah saw God, not indeed with his bodily eyes, but in a prophetic trance, in which the ordinary operations of the mind were suspended and spiritual realities assumed concrete and visible forms. That the publica-

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord 6

tion of the vision belongs to a more advanced stage of the prophet's ministry seems implied by the note of time in *v.* 1, and is probable on other grounds. Its place in the book is best explained by the supposition that it was written as the prologue to a short collection of oracles (*vii.*—*ix.* 7, see General Introd. p. lxxii) giving a summary of Isaiah's teaching in the early part of the reign of Ahaz. But we have no right to imagine that the prophet, from his subsequent experience, read into his original commission elements which it did not convey to his mind at the time. To suppose that he could not have carried on his work under the depressing conviction (expressed in *vv.* 9—13) that he would only harden the people in unbelief is to mistake the prophet's attitude to his work. If there were any force in the argument, it would prove too much, for it would be necessary to suppose that the chapter was written after Isaiah's life-work was over. But Isaiah, like his predecessors Amos and Hosea and his successors Jeremiah and Ezekiel, spoke the word of God under an inward constraint, and his writings contain no sign that he ever cherished any expectations of success beyond what the vision allows.

The chapter stands unrivalled in the Old Testament both for grandeur of conception and the majestic simplicity of its style. The narrative is in prose: the speeches are rhythmical. There are strictly no divisions, but for convenience of exposition we may distinguish three stages in the process of initiation:—

i. *vv.* 1—4. The vision of Jehovah in His glory, and the splendours of His court.

ii. *vv.* 5—8. The impression produced by this sight on the mind of the prophet: at first a crushing sense of imperfection and guilt, which is transformed by a symbolic act denoting forgiveness into glad self-surrender to the service of the King.

iii. *vv.* 9—13. His commission to declare the word of God to the people, with an announcement of its twofold effect: (1) to increase the spiritual insensibility of the mass of the nation (*vv.* 9, 10), and (2) to lay waste the land by a succession of exterminating judgments, which shall leave only a remnant to form the nucleus of the future people of God (11—13).

1—4. Jehovah appears to the prophet in human form, and as a King, seated on a throne, surrounded by ministering servants who sing His praise (cf. 1 Ki. xxii. 19 ff.). The scene is the Temple (*v.* 1), where Isaiah probably was when the vision occurred. There is no occasion to suppose that a "heavenly palace" is meant. What the prophet sees is the spiritual reality of which the Temple was a symbol, Jehovah's presence as King in the midst of His people. Cf. ch. viii. 18.

1. *In the year that king Uzziah died*] i.e. about 740 B.C.; see Chronological Note, pp. lxxv f. Whether the event happened before or after the king's death cannot be determined. It lends an additional interest to the vision if we adopt the latter view, and regard this as the divine answer to the anxious foreboding thoughts which naturally arose in a susceptible mind at the death of a strong and successful ruler.

sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train
 2 filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each
 one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and
 with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
 3 And one cried unto another, and said,

The earthly king has passed away, and now Isaiah sees the true King in His glory.

I saw also the Lord] Many codices read here Jehovah, but the name in the received text is *Adonai*, the **Sovereign** (see on ch. i. 24). The word "also" answers to nothing in the original. The words **high and lofty** apply to the throne, not to Jehovah Himself, as in ch. lvii. 15.

his train filled the temple] The skirts of His vesture fill the whole space, and on these alone, not on the person of Jehovah, Isaiah allows his eyes to rest.

2. *Above it...seraphims*] better, **Seraphim were standing over Him**, i.e. in the attitude of service. One standing in the presence of another who is seated is always said to be *over* him, whatever their mutual relations may be: 1 Ki. xxii. 19; Gen. xviii. 2, 8; Ex. xviii. 13, &c. The Seraphim (probably "fiery beings") are mentioned nowhere else in Scripture as angelic beings. Their function in this vision is purely symbolical. They are the attendants of Jehovah's court or the ministers of the invisible sanctuary; they reflect the glory of God, and by their presence and actions suggest new and fuller conceptions of His ineffable majesty. The basis of the symbol is obscure. The serpents with which the Israelites were plagued in the desert are called Seraphim (sing. *Sārāph*: Num. xxi. 6—9; Deut. viii. 15), and some connexion between the two uses of the word is probable. An intermediate link would be supplied by the "flying Saraph" of ch. xiv. 29, xxx. 6,—apparently an allusion to a widely diffused mythological notion; see Herodotus II. 75 on the winged serpents of Arabia. It is also worthy of notice that the brazen Saraph (Num. xxi. 8) made by Moses must have been a conspicuous object in the temple at the time of Isaiah's call (2 Ki. xviii. 4). On the other hand the analogy of the Cherubim has led to the theory that both are personifications of the phenomena of the thunder-storm, the Cherubim representing the dark cloud and the Seraphim the serpent-like lightning (see Cheyne, *Comm.*, and art. 'Cherubim' in *Encyc. Brit.*). Different elements, in fact, seem to be combined in the conception of the Saraph; but whether it had been already incorporated in the religion of Israel, or whether Isaiah was the first who lifted it into the sphere of pure spiritual ideas it is quite impossible to say. Isaiah's Seraphim are winged creatures, but certainly not serpentine in form, probably human, or at least partly human, like the Cherubim (Ez. i. 5—14).
with twain he covered his face...] The sense is well expressed by the Targum: "With two he covered his face *that he might not see*; and with two he covered his body *that he might not be seen*."

3. *And one cried unto another*] (frequentat. impf.). Cf. Rev. iv. 8.

Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts:

That which fills the whole earth is His glory.

Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts :

The whole earth *is* full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him ⁴ that cried, and the house was filled *with* smoke. Then ⁵ said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people

The word "holy," thrice repeated as if it struck the chord to which the whole nature of these pure beings vibrated (the ancient church found here an allusion to the mystery of the Trinity) sums up the meaning of the vision in so far as it is a revelation of God. The general notion of holiness is too complex to be analysed here. The root idea appears to be that of *distance* or *separation*. As a predicate of deity it expresses first of all the awful contrast between the divine and the human, and then those positive attributes of God which constitute true divinity, and call for the religious emotions of awe, reverence and adoration. What Isaiah here receives, therefore, is a new and overpowering impression of the Supreme Godhead of Jehovah; the whole impact of the vision on his mind is concentrated in the word which he hears from the lips of the seraphim. Although the idea of holiness in the O.T. is never to be identified with that of moral purity, it is clear from Isaiah's immediate sense of guilt that ethical perfection is included among the attributes which make up the holiness or Godhead of Jehovah (see Robertson Smith, *Prophets*, pp. 224 ff.).

The second line of the Trisagion celebrates the "glory" of Jehovah, His manifestation of Himself in nature,—one of the leading thoughts of the second part of this book (ch. xl. ff.). The seraphim contemplate the universal diffusion of this "glory" (*sub specie aeternitatis*) as a present fact; elsewhere it is an ideal yet to be realised: Num. xiv. 21; Hab. ii. 14.

4. *the posts of the door moved*] **the foundations of the thresholds shook** (R.V.).

was filled (began to fill) with smoke] The smoke symbolises the "dark side of Jehovah's self-manifestation" (Rev. xv. 8), the reaction of His holy nature against sin. It answers to the rising consciousness of alienation and impurity in the prophet's mind, expressed in the next verse.

5. Isaiah is overwhelmed with the sense of his own unworthiness; he feels himself cut off by a spiritual defect from participation in the solemn mystery which he, alone of mortals, has been privileged to behold; his *eyes* have seen, but his *lips* are impure.

I am undone] The Vulgate and other ancient versions give the impossible rendering, "I have been silent" (*tacui*). Jerome's paraphrase is interesting as explaining the genesis of a curious legend, that Isaiah had already been a prophet, but had lost the gift of inspiration through his unfaithfulness: "quia tacui et non audacter Osiam regem corripui, ideo labia mea immunda sunt."

a man of unclean lips] "A pure lip" is required for the worship of

of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the
 6 LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto
 me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken
 7 with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid *it* upon
 my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and
 8 thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also

Jehovah (Zeph. iii. 9); Isaiah would fain join in the praises of the Seraphim, but the impulse is checked by the uncleanness of his lips, which is the impurity of his whole nature concentrated, as it were, in the organs of expression. Isaiah is not yet a prophet; but in this profound sense of the necessity for a consecration of the faculty of speech we must surely recognise an unconscious preparation for the task of speaking the word of God.

a people of unclean lips] Cf. ch. iii. 8. The vision of God which has brought his own sin to light, reveals to him also the sinfulness of the people among whom he dwells. They too are unfit to take the holy name of Jehovah on their lips; their whole worship of Him is profane. And this comes home to him as an aggravation of his guilt, that his mind is saturated with the atmosphere of ungodliness in which he lives and moves and has his being.

for mine eyes have seen the King] A second ground for the ejaculation "I am undone!" That the sight of God brings death to men is an idea frequently expressed in the O.T. (Ex. xix. 21, xxx. 20; Jud. xiii. 22); the preceding clauses shew that to Isaiah's consciousness the danger springs from sin, and not from mere creaturely frailty.

6, 7. The ceremony of purification is in many respects unique, and seems to involve several ideas: (1) It shews that contact with the fire of the divine holiness is not necessarily destructive even to man. It is possible to "dwell with devouring fire" (ch. xxxiii. 14). (2) It signifies the removal from the prophet of all in him which is incompatible with the holiness of Jehovah. Fire is both a symbol of holiness and an agent of purification (Num. xxxi. 23; Mal. iii. 2). "As earthly fire burns away external impurity, so the heavenly fire burns away the defilement of sin, first from the lips, but through them from the whole man" (Dillmann). (3) It is not without significance that the fire is taken "from off the altar." The **hot stone** (A.V. *live coal*) was an implement used in common life for transferring heat from the hearth to where it was required. The meaning of the Seraph's act is that the atoning efficacy of the altar is conveyed to the person of Isaiah, to his lips in particular, because there the sin of his nature had seemed to be concentrated.

7. *and thine iniquity...purged*] and thy guilt passes away and thy sin is atoned for. The last word is the technical term for the expiatory effect of the sacrificial ritual.

8. Now for the first time Isaiah hears the voice of God, the purification of his lips having fitted him for personal converse with Jehovah and spiritual sympathy with His purposes.

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here *am* I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, 9
Hear ye indeed, but understand not;
And see ye indeed, but perceive not.
Make the heart of this people fat, 10
And make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,
And understand *with* their heart, and convert, and be healed.

who will go for us?] The plural is not that of majesty, but includes the "council of the holy ones" (Ps. lxxxix. 7), or the angelic "hosts of heaven" (1 Ki. xxii. 19 f.).

Here am I; send me] The spontaneity and self-abandonment of this response are characteristic of Isaiah. He is as yet ignorant of the nature of his commission, yet he freely accepts it; and throughout life he never felt his message to be a grievous burden, as Jeremiah often did.

9, 10. The first effect of Isaiah's prophetic work: to increase the spiritual insensibility of the people. The prophet's words will go hand in hand with the "work of Jehovah," the development of His purpose in history (v. 12, cf. Am. iii. 7); the people shall hear the one and see the other, but neither will bring them to true insight.

9. *this people*] A contemptuous designation of Israel, peculiar to Isaiah: cf. ch. viii. 6, 12, ix. 16, xxviii. 11, 14, xxix. 13 f.

Hear ye indeed...] Rather:

Hear ye continually, but perceive not

And see ye continually, but understand not.

The verbs, of course, are imperatives. On the force of the inf. abs. see Davidson, *Synt.* § 86 c (where, however, a different view of this particular passage is taken).

10. *Make the heart...fat*] i.e. callous, unfeeling, Ps. cxix. 70. In Hebrew idiom, the "heart" includes the understanding. *shut* (lit. smear) *its eyes*] cf. xxix. 10, xlv. 18, xlii. 19 f.

The difficulties created in our minds by this startling, and even harsh, statement of a great law of the spiritual world, are partly due to the tendency of Scripture writers to refer all things immediately to the will of God. To the Hebrew mind what we call secondary causes scarcely exist, at least in the sphere of religion. That which, in given circumstances, is the inevitable result of God's providential dispensations is viewed absolutely, apart from its conditions, as a distinct divine purpose. The truth revealed to Isaiah is that the unbelief of his countrymen amounts to an incapacity for divine things, which can only be intensified by the further disclosure of the truth of God. And this, which is the inevitable issue of his own prophetic mission, is represented to him as

- 11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered,
 Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant,
 And the houses without man,
 And the land be utterly desolate,
 12 And the LORD have removed men far away,
 And *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the
 land.

Jehovah's intention in sending him. Isaiah realises the profound truth that the most decisive and searching judgment to which men are subjected lies in the abundance of the revelations of God vouchsafed to them. It is a principle often appealed to in the New Testament, and frequently in the very words of our prophet (Matt. xiii. 14 f. and parallels; Acts xvi. 26 f.; Rom. xi. 8). "This is the judgment that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (John iii. 19).

11—13. The hardening of the people in unbelief is to be accompanied by a series of external judgments, culminating in the utter ruin of the nation.

11. *Lord, how long?*] The prophet feels that in the divine counsels there must be a limit to this process of judicial hardening, that it must reach a crisis with a day of hope beyond it. But the answer is "Not till the existing Israel has been annihilated."

Until the cities...without man] (Omit *the*.) Cf. ch. v. 9.

and the land be utterly desolate] lit. "be wasted to desolation." LXX., changing a letter, reads "and the land be left a desolation."

12. *and there be a great forsaking...land*] Better, **and great be the vacancy in the midst of the land.** The word "vacancy" (deserted place) is used in xvii. 9: for the thought cf. ch. v. 9, vii. 16 ff.

13. The verse reads:

And should there still be in it a tenth,
 It must again pass through the fire,
 Like the terebinth and like the oak,
 To which a stump (remains) when they are felled;
 A holy seed is the stump thereof.

The last clause is wanting in the LXX., and with its omission it undoubtedly becomes possible to understand the figure of the verse as a sentence of final rejection; not only will the tree be cut down, but its stump will be destroyed by fire. The usual interpretation (which there is no reason to abandon) is: As the terebinth and oak when cut down retain the principle of vitality in their roots, which will again spring up into a great tree (cf. Job xiv. 7 ff.), so the ruined Israel contains the indestructible germ of the future kingdom of God, the "holy seed" is wrapped up in it. The difference is not material, since in any view Isaiah speaks of an extermination of the actually existing people: but the first explanation excludes Isaiah's characteristic doctrine of the Remnant, which we should certainly expect to find in his inaugural vision. It must have been shortly after this time that he gave a signifi-

But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and ¹³ shall be eaten :

As a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves* :

So the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

cant expression to that doctrine in the name of his son *Shear-jashub* (see on next chapter).

a tenth] Perhaps an allusion to Am. v. 3.

A symbolical representation of the idea of this verse is given in Ez. v. 1—4. Cf. also Zech. xiii. 8.

CHAPTERS VII. 1.—IX. 7.

A collection of prophecies belonging to the reign of Ahaz. Two important events in Isaiah's career are here chronicled. (1) The first is his *début* as a practical statesman, seeking to shape the destinies of his country by a definite policy urged on the king and his advisers. (2) The second is the formation of a band of disciples, accompanied apparently by the prophet's temporary withdrawal from public life (viii. 16—18). Hence we obtain an obvious division of the section into two parts, which may have been separated by a considerable interval of time, although there is no great reason to doubt that the whole was written before the death of Ahaz. (1) Ch. vii. 1—viii. 15 is a summary of Isaiah's activity during the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitish invasion; (2) viii. 19—ix. 7 probably represents the instruction communicated by the prophet to the inner circle of his believing adherents. In both parts the chapters exhibit the working out in history of the principles revealed in the latter part of ch. vi. The "great refusal" of Ahaz (vii. 12), approved as it seems to have been by public opinion, was a signal illustration of the judicial hardening produced by the overwhelming clearness of the divine revelation; and the gathering of a small religious fellowship round the person and family of the prophet shews how the doctrine of the remnant or the "holy seed" became from this time a practical ideal in his ministry.

In order to understand Isaiah's words and actions at this period it is necessary to realise as clearly as possible the salient features of the political situation created in Judah by the Syro-Ephraimitish invasion. Hostilities on the part of both Syria and Ephraim against Judah are recorded as having commenced before the death of Jotham (2 Ki. xv. 37), though there is no mention at that time of a formal alliance between the two powers. It was only after the accession of Ahaz that the crisis became acute; and the words of v. 2 seem to point to the sudden development of a new and formidable danger. This consisted in the avowed object of the league to destroy the independence of Judah by the removal of the native dynasty and the establishment of a creature of the allies on the throne of David (v. 6). It is generally supposed that the ultimate motive of the attack was to coerce Judah into a coalition to oppose the westward progress of the Assyrian arms.

7 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of

To allay what he perceived to be a groundless alarm on the part of the king and court was one purpose of Isaiah's memorable interview with Ahaz. But this of itself does not explain the extraordinary vehemence and urgency of the prophet's appeal. It becomes fully intelligible only when we understand that he wished to warn the king against the fatal step, which he afterwards took, of calling in the aid of Assyria against his two petty foes. It is only reasonable to suppose that this obvious and tempting expedient had already been discussed in the royal council and was favourably entertained by Ahaz. Isaiah was no doubt alive to the grave political dangers which would result from placing the country in a position of servitude to the Assyrian Empire. He also perceived how unnecessary it was for Judah to make any advances in that direction at this time, since it was quite certain that the ambitious schemes of Rezin and Pekah would speedily be crushed by Tiglath-pileser, whether Ahaz applied to him or not. All this must have been evident to any sagacious observer who kept his head amidst the general panic caused by the approach of the allied armies. But the prophet perceived that higher interests than the political future of the nation were at stake. He was opposed, on religious grounds, to all compacts with heathen powers as involving disloyalty to Jehovah and distrust of His power. The crisis presented itself to him as a test of the religious mind of the people, of its capacity for exercising that fearless trust in Jehovah's word which alone could guide it safely through the complications of the immediate future to the felicity that lay beyond. Hence the great object of this encounter with Ahaz is to bring round the king to Isaiah's own attitude of calm reliance on the help of God, and above all things to dissuade him from compromising his position by entering into direct relations with Assyria.

CHAP. VII. ISAIAH'S INTERVIEW WITH AHAZ AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The chapter is divided into two well-marked sections :

i. *vv.* 1—17. The prophet meets Ahaz at a critical juncture of the war and holds out a promise of deliverance on the condition of faith in Jehovah. The king's unbelief is answered by the threat of an Assyrian invasion.

(1) The historical introduction (*vv.* 1—3).

(2) The divine message of assurance and encouragement, ending with a warning against unbelief (*vv.* 4—9). (We must suppose that something in the king's demeanour had betrayed his impatience of the prophet's exhortation.)

(3) If any sign in heaven or earth will overcome the king's incredulity, he has but to name it and it shall come to pass (*vv.* 10, 11). Ahaz still remains obdurate (*v.* 12).

Israel, went up *towards* Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit

(4) Isaiah announces the God-given sign of Immanuel, as a token (a) of deliverance from the immediate danger, and (b) of the coming Assyrian invasion (vv. 13—17).

ii. vv. 18—25. An expansion of the threat of v. 17, but probably not spoken to Ahaz at the time. It is a picture of the desolation of the land, ravaged by Egyptian and Assyrian troops, and left destitute of all but the scantiest means of human subsistence.

1. The genealogy of Ahaz seems unnecessary for the contemporaries of Isaiah, although it might be given to connect the passage with ch. vi. 1. The latter part of the verse closely resembles 2 Ki. xvi. 5; and it is not improbable that the data were supplied by an editor from the historical book, in order to make the circumstances intelligible to later generations of readers. Originally the introduction may have run: "And in the days of Ahaz it was reported to the house of David," &c.

to war against it, but could not prevail against it] lit. **to fight against it but were unable to fight against it**. From 2 Ki. xvi. 5 we learn that the city was blockaded. It was the object of the allies to take it by assault, but in this they were baffled, either by reason of the strength of the place, or because they were compelled to raise the siege. "Fight" means "fight at close quarters" as 2 Sam. xi. 20 compared with v. 1.

2. *the house of David*] (Cf. vv. 13, 17) either the court (ch. xxii. 22) or the royal family (1 Sam. xx. 16, &c.), which must have formed a numerous and powerful caste, and must have exercised a considerable influence on the government under a weak king like Ahaz. This was probably the first time that the Davidic dynasty had been menaced by a serious danger.

Syria is confederate with Ephraim] lit. **Syria has alighted upon Ephraim** (R.V. marg. "resteth"). The idea seems to be that the Syrian armies already occupy the Ephraimitish territory (settling there like a swarm of locusts, v. 19: 2 Sam. xvii. 12) preparatory to the joint attack. The fine simile at the end of the verse is enough to prove that Isaiah himself is the narrator.

3. The prophet is instructed to meet Ahaz at a certain point outside the city, taking his son with him for a sign to the king.

Shear-jashub] "Remnant-shall-turn," i.e. "turn to Jehovah," not "return from exile" (ch. x. 22). How much the name meant to Ahaz we cannot tell; nor is it clear whether the boy was present to have the incident impressed on his own memory, or to recall to the king's mind some earlier prophecy of Isaiah in which the name was explained.

4 of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; and say unto him,

Take heed, and be quiet;

Fear not, neither be fainthearted

For the two tails of these smoking firebrands,

The latter seems more probable. In any case the name embodies a fundamental idea of Isaiah's ministry (see on ch. vi. 13), and if it conveyed any significance to Ahaz at this time it was a prediction at once of judgment and hope: a remnant shall turn; but *only* a remnant!

at the end of the conduit...field] On the same spot the Rabshakeh stood 34 years later and delivered Sennacherib's insulting message to Hezekiah. It seems therefore to have been within earshot of the wall (ch. xxxvi. 2, cf. v. 11; 2 Ki. xviii. 17, 26). On what side of the city it is to be sought is as yet a matter of conjecture. (1) The "upper pool" is by many identified with the *Birket el-Mamilla* (about half a mile to the west of the city), from which a canal leads to reservoirs within the walls. In this case it would be difficult to explain the expression "go out to the end of the conduit," and besides the distance from the wall is too great. (2) Tradition fixes the site of the Assyrian camp on the north of the city, and here an ancient aqueduct (older than Herod's temple) has been discovered which pierces the wall to the east of the Damascus gate, and discharges into a large reservoir in the northern quarter of the city. If this reservoir be the "upper pool" the end of its conduit would be the northern extremity of the canal mentioned. (3) A third suggestion is that the "upper pool" like the "lower pool" (ch. xxii. 9) was in the south of the city and inside the wall. It has been identified with a recently-discovered pool near the present pool of Siloam, and a conduit has also been excavated which carried its surplus water outside the wall, to where the "fuller's field" is thought to have been. Ahaz was at this anxious moment devoting his personal attention to the water supply of his capital. Operations were apparently in progress either for filling the reservoirs and cisterns within the city, or for stopping the sources that would be accessible to the enemy. In the historic sieges of Jerusalem the assailants always suffered more from scarcity of water than the defenders; and it is not impossible that the precautions taken on this occasion were the reason why the allies "were not able to fight against it."

4. The message to Ahaz begins with an exhortation to composure and presence of mind (cf. ch. xxx. 15). The prophet does not deprecate reasonable forethought for the safety of the city, but only the excessive alarm which might drive the court into a false and dangerous policy.

Take heed, and be quiet] The first verb might be subordinate to the second: "See that thou keep calm." But it is better to take them independently: "ut et exterius contineat sese, et intus pacato sit animo" (Calvin).

the two tails...firebrands] Render, with R.V. these two tails of smoking firebrands. This enterprise is but the last flicker of two expiring torches. Syria and Israel have both suffered severely from the

For the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, 5
Have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,
Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, 6
And let us make a breach therein for us,
And set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of
Tabeal:

Thus saith the Lord GOD, 7
It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.
For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, 8
And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin;
And within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be
broken, that *it be* not a people.

Assyrians and their national independence will speedily be extinguished.
Fire is the emblem of war (ch. xlii. 25).

the son of Remaliah] Pekah was a usurper, a *novus homo*, and Isaiah never condescends to utter his name. Cf. vv. 5, 9.

5—7. The project of Rezin and Pekah is opposed to the purpose of Jehovah and shall come to nought. The verses form a single sentence, 5 and 6 being the protasis and 7 the apodosis.

5. Change the order with R.V.: **Because Syria hath counselled evil against thee, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, saying, &c.**

6. *and vex it*] Rather **frighten it** (cf. v. 16, where the *Qal* of the same verb means “cower”), unless we adopt a conjecture of Gesenius giving the sense “press it hard.” The idea, however, is probably that the allies trusted greatly to the panic caused by the suddenness of their attack.

make a breach therein] **break into it**, by forcing the passes; as in 2 Chr. xxi. 17, &c.

the son of Tabeal] Another obscure adventurer like the son of Remaliah. The form of the name (*Tāb'ēl*, cf. *Tab-rimmon*, 1 Ki. xv. 18) suggests that the *protégé* of the allies was a Syrian. Their plan is very complete; the successor of Ahaz is already nominated.

8, 9. A confirmation of v. 7; but the thought is difficult to grasp. The general meaning seems to be that the league is an attempt to obliterate the political distinctions which Jehovah has established between the neighbouring states. (Observe that in v. 16 the prophet seems to speak as if Syria and Israel had become one kingdom in virtue of their alliance.) Syria and Ephraim are separate nationalities, each with its own capital and king; Judah belongs to neither of them and is not to be amalgamated with them. In short: “Damascus is the head of Syria and of nothing else, &c.” We may even suppose (with Ewald) that Isaiah intended to add, “but the head of Judah is Jerusalem and the head of Jerusalem is Jehovah of Hosts.”

8. *and within threescore and five years...people*] This clause is

- 9 And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
 And the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son.
 If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be estab-
 lished.
- 10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,
 11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God;

suspicious on several grounds. (1) Because of its position; Ephraim has not yet been mentioned, and a prophecy of its annihilation would hardly have been followed by an argument (9 *a*) which assumes its continued independence. (2) There is no analogy in the prophets for so exact a specification of time with regard to a distant event. When the prophets fix a term of years they use round numbers (ch. xxiii. 17, &c.). (3) Isaiah could not expect to allay the fears of Ahaz by a prediction that was not to be fulfilled for 65 years. In v. 16 and ch. viii. 4 he foretells the overthrow of Pekah and Rezin within a very short period. Even Delitzsch, who defends the verse as a whole, admits the force of the last two objections and proposes to substitute the words "within a little while." But the great majority of commentators agree in regarding the whole clause as a marginal gloss, intended to be read *after* the first half of v. 9. This view ought probably to be accepted; but Duhm rightly observes that the gloss must be a very old one, since a late annotator would almost certainly have dated the extermination of Ephraim from the destruction of Samaria in 721, about 15 years after Isaiah spoke. What precise event he had in his mind is indeed very uncertain. The most plausible conjecture remains that of Archbishop Ussher, who explained it of the settlement of foreign colonists in Samaria by Esarhaddon or Asshurbanipal (Osnappar, Ezra iv. 2, 10). Sixty-five years from the assigned date of the prediction would bring us to about 670 B.C.; and Esarhaddon was succeeded by Asshurbanipal about 668. Of course the chronology need not be strictly accurate.

9. If ye will not believe (*ta'āmēnū*) ye shall not be established (*tē'āmēnū*, 2 Sam. vii. 16). One of Isaiah's paronomasias; "*gläubet ihr nicht, so bleibet ihr nicht*" (Luther); "if ye will not have *faith*, ye shall not have *staith*" (G. A. Smith). Cf. 2 Chron. xx. 20. The words mark an epoch in the history of revelation; never before probably had the distinctively religious principle of faith been so plainly exhibited as the touchstone of character and of destiny (cf. Gen. xv. 6; Hab. ii. 4). Here as throughout Scripture faith means trust in the positive revelation of God, the faith required of Ahaz being whole-hearted acceptance of God's word through Isaiah. The doctrine is one of the foundation truths of this prophet's ministry (cf. xxviii. 16, xxx. 15; and see Intro. p. lv.).

10—12. Isaiah's last ineffectual effort to bring Ahaz to the attitude of faith. A sign is offered and refused.

10. *Moreover the LORD spake again*] Better, *And Jehovah spake further*. The expression does not of itself imply that this second communication followed immediately on the first, but that is certainly the most natural supposition.

11. *Ask thee a sign*] The "sign" (*'ôth*, *môphēth*, here the former),

Ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt ¹²
the LORD. And he said,

Hear ye now, O house of David;

Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye
weary my God also? ¹³

plays a very large part in O.T. religion and with considerable latitude of meaning. The most important cases are those in which a divine revelation is attested by some striking event within the range of immediate perception through the senses. Such a sign may be a supernatural occurrence conveying an irresistible persuasion of the divine agency (ch. xxxviii. 7, 22; Ex. vii. 8 ff.; Jud. vi. 17, 36 ff.; 1 Ki. xiii. 1 ff.). But it may also be an ordinary event, which acquires significance through its having been foretold, or asked for (Gen. xxiv. 14; 1 Sam. x. 2 ff.; xiv. 10; Luke ii. 12). Thus of two predicted events the nearer may be made a "sign" of the more remote (1 Sam. ii. 34; Jer. xlv. 29 f.). Or, in a still more general sense, the "sign" may be merely an incident of the fulfilled prediction, which carries the mind back to the time of the prophecy, when the sign was appointed (Ex. iii. 12; Is. xxxvii. 30). That for which a sign is here offered to Ahaz is the certainty of divine help, or (what is the same thing) the truth that God speaks to him through the prophet. Although Isaiah was undoubtedly prepared to give a miraculous sign (see next clause) it is not to be at once assumed that the sign actually given (vv. 14 ff.) must be of the same order.

ask it either in the depth...above] Lit.: going deep to Sheol or **mounting high above** (reading *shē'ōlāh* for *shē'alāh*). It is thought by some that this translation could be obtained from the actual Hebrew vocalisation, but this is doubtful. It is at all events the one that would be most readily suggested by an unpointed text, and it is justified by the antithetic structure of the sentence. The whole realm of creation, from the heavens to the underworld, is as it were put at the disposal of Ahaz for the purpose of this sign. It has been said that Isaiah played a dangerous game in staking his reputation on so unbounded a choice. Undoubtedly he did, if he was not speaking under genuine divine inspiration.

12. The answer of Ahaz reveals his utter incapacity for the faith which Isaiah demanded. He evidently believes that the sign will happen if he asks it, yet he cannot trust the spiritual fact which lies behind it. He is afraid of being committed to a policy in which he has no confidence, and therefore, under a pretence of reverence, he declines the ordeal. He **will not put Jehovah to the proof**. To "put Jehovah to the proof" is a mark of unbelief (Ex. xvii. 7; Deut. vi. 16), but to refuse a proof which Jehovah Himself offers is an insult to the divine majesty which exhausts the patience of the Almighty.

13. Speaking under the deepest excitement, the prophet proceeds to unfold the consequences of such impenetrable hardness of heart.

Is it a small thing for you...] Trans. *Is it too little for you to*

14

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign ;
Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son,
And shall call his name Immanuel.

weary men (i.e. the prophet himself) **that ye weary, &c.** The *house of David* is addressed, perhaps because Isaiah had already experienced rebuffs from the royal princes, although none was so direct a defiance of God as this of Ahaz. *my God*] cf. *thy God* in v. 11. Ahaz has practically renounced the religion of Jehovah.

14—16. The sign of Immanuel. See Additional Note at the end of this chapter. **14.** *Therefore*] because of this act of unbelief. *the Lord himself*] The word is *Adonai*, as ch. vi. 1.

Behold, a virgin] (LXX. ἡ παρθένος, other Greek versions νεάνις.) The Hebrew word (*‘almāh*) means strictly “a young woman of marriageable age.” Both etymology and usage (cf. esp. Prov. xxx. 19 ; Cant. vi. 8) are adverse to the opinion, once prevalent among Christian interpreters and maintained by a few in recent times, that virginity is necessarily connoted (see Robertson Smith, *Prophets*, Revd. Ed. pp. 426 f.). To express that idea a different word (*bēthûlāh*) must have been employed, although even it might not be wholly free from ambiguity (? Joel i. 8). It is, of course, not disputed that *‘almāh* may be used of a virgin (as Gen. xxiv. 43 ; Ex. ii. 8) ; but even if this usage were more uniform than it is, it would still be far from proving that virginity was an essential of the notion. It would appear, therefore, that the idea of a miraculous conception was not present to Isaiah’s mind at this time, since a prediction of such astounding import must surely have been clothed in unambiguous language. Nor does the def. art., which is used in the original, necessarily denote a particular individual. (Cf. 2 Sam. xvii. 17, and see Davidson, *Synt.* § 21 c.) So far as grammar and context go, the expression may mean any young woman, fit to become a mother, whether as yet married or unmarried.

shall conceive, and bear a son] The same phrase in Gen. xvi. 11 ; Jud. xiii. 5. In the passage before us the verbs in the original are both participles, and might refer either to the present or the future. But it is doubtful if we can fairly apply one to the present and the other to the future, translating “*is with child and shall bear.*” Since the birth is certainly future, it seems natural to take the first verb in a future sense also.

and shall call] An archaic form, easily mistaken for 2nd pers. (so LXX. &c.). The mother names the child, as in Gen. iv. 1, 25 ; xix. 37 f. ; xxix. 32, &c. An instructive parallel is the naming of the child Ichabod, born to Eli’s daughter-in-law on the dark day when the ark of God was taken and the glory departed from Israel (1 Sam. iv. 19—22).

Immanuel] “With us is God.” The battle-cry of Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years War, “Gott mit uns,” was also Isaiah’s watchword for the coming crisis (cf. ch. viii. 8, 10) ; and like other great thoughts of his ministry he as it were gives it personal and concrete actuality by conceiving it as embodied in the name of a child.

Butter and honey shall he eat, 15
 That he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the
 good.
 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, 16
 and choose the good,
 The land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both
 her kings.

The LORD shall bring upon thee, 17
 And upon thy people, and upon thy father's house,

15. *Butter and honey shall he eat*] This has to be explained by v. 22, where the eating of butter (lit. "thick milk") and (wild) honey is a symptom of the primitive simplicity to which human life is reduced by the cessation of agriculture. The meaning is that the youth of Immanuel will be spent amidst the privations of a land laid waste by foreign invaders.

that he may know] This is the rendering of the Vulgate and other ancient versions, and is maintained still by a few scholars. But the idea that eating butter and honey promotes the formation of ethical character is somewhat bizarre. Translate with R.V. **when he knoweth** (more precisely "towards the time when, &c."). It must be admitted, however, that *exact* parallels to this use of the preposition cannot be produced (though cf. Gen. xxiv. 63; Ex. xiv. 27). But what lapse of time is here indicated? The expression "refuse the evil and choose the good" must bear the same sense as in v. 16, and from ch. viii. 4 we see that the event predicted in v. 16 was expected to happen in a very short time,—within two or three years from the date of the interview with Ahaz. It would seem, therefore, that the phrase denotes the age at which a child begins to exercise intelligent choice between the pleasant and the painful (cf. 2 Sam. xix. 35). Most commentators, it is true, explain it of the development of moral consciousness, and think of a period of 10 or 12 years or even longer. But this introduces a needless discrepancy between this sign and that of viii. 4. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that Isaiah expected the Assyrian invasion of Judah (which of course is presupposed by v. 15) to happen simultaneously with the destruction of Samaria and Damascus.

16. The "for" seems to go back to v. 14: he shall be called "God with us," because whilst he is yet in infancy a signal deliverance shall be wrought.

the land that thou abhorrest...kings] Render: **the land before whose two kings thou cowerest shall be deserted.** The two "tails of smoking firebrands" shall have burned out. Ephraim and Syria are treated as one territory, ruled by the two allied kings.

17 gives the other aspect, the threatening aspect, of the sign Immanuel, interpreting v. 15. A calamity involving the king, the dynasty, and the nation, is the retribution appointed for the unbelief of Ahaz.

Days that have not come,
From the day that Ephraim departed from Judah;
Even the king of Assyria.

- 18 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall hiss for the fly that *is* in the
uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt,
And for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria.
19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them
In the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks,
And upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.
20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor
that is hired,
Namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of
Assyria,
The head, and the hair of the feet:

from the day...Judah] The revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam was the heaviest disaster that had ever befallen the house of David. The last words, *the king of Assyria*, may as many think be a gloss, but they are at least a correct gloss.

18—25. Further announcements (not addressed to Ahaz, but probably compiled from fragments of several of Isaiah's prophecies) of the Assyrian invasion (18—20) and its consequences (21—25).

18, 19. Judah, as the theatre of the inevitable duel between Assyria and Egypt for the mastery of Asia, must endure all the horrors of the double invasion.

18. *the LORD shall hiss...*] See ch. v. 26. The comparison of the Egyptians to flies and the Assyrians to bees is thoroughly appropriate, Egypt being infested with swarms of flies (xviii. 1), while Assyria was pre-eminently a land of bees. Dangerous enemies are compared to bees in Deut. i. 44; Ps. cxviii. 12. *the uttermost part*] (or "end") naturally suggests the Ethiopians, who however did not become masters of Egypt till B.C. 728. *the rivers* (strictly "Nile-arms") *of Egypt*] The word used is an Egyptian name for the Nile.

19. The figure is kept up. *desolate valleys*] rather, **precipitous ravines** (lit. "valleys of precipices"). *upon all thorns...bushes*] Render: **upon all the thorn-bushes** (lv. 13) **and upon all the pastures**. These are the places naturally frequented by insects.

20. A new figure for the degradation and impoverishment of Judah at the hands of Assyria. *In the same day*] **In that day**.

with a razor...river] Better: **with the razor hired beyond the river** (Euphrates). There may possibly be here an allusion to the "hiring" of Assyria by Ahaz (2 Ki. xvi. 7 f.); if so the prophecy is almost certainly later than vv. 1—17.

the king of Assyria] see on v. 17.

And it shall also consume the beard.

And it shall come to pass in that day,

That a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep;

And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk *that they* shall give he shall eat butter:

For butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.

And it shall come to pass in that day,

That every place shall be,

Where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings,

It shall *even* be for briers and thorns.

With arrows and with bows shall *men* come thither;

Because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

And *on* all hills that shall be digged with the mattock,

There shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns:

and it shall also consume the beard] **and even the beard** (the symbol of manly dignity) **it shall take away.**

21, 22. The land having gone out of cultivation, the sparse population is reduced to the pastoral life of the desert. Cf. ch. v. 14, 17, xxxii. 12—14.

22. *butter and honey* become the staple food of the country; in normal circumstances they were only eaten as delicacies along with bread and flesh (Gen. xviii. 8; 2 Sam. xvii. 20). **Immanuel is the representative of the young generation nourished on this frugal fare (v. 15).**

23—25. The most **costly vineyards, requiring the most sedulous cultivation, are overrun by thorns and thistles, cf. ch. v. 6.**

23. *a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings*] i.e. "silver shekels." Schrader reckons the silver shekel as equal to about half-a-crown of our money, which would make the price of the vineyard about £125. But the estimate neglects the important element of variation in the purchasing power of money. The traveller Burckhardt, who found it the custom in Syria to estimate the value of a vineyard according to the number of vines, tells us that good vines are valued at less than three pence each.

24. *With arrows and with bows*] the weapons of the hunter (Gen. xxvii. 3).

25. *And on all hills...mattock*] **And as for all the hills that used to be hoed with the mattock.** Such hills were the best sites for vineyards (ch. v. 2).

there shall not come thither the fear...] This could only mean, in the present connexion, that there would be no more anxiety about thorns, &c., because the place was hopelessly overgrown by them. It is better

But it shall be for the sending forth of oxen,
And for the treading of lesser cattle.

to render with R.V. **thou shalt not come thither for fear of, &c.**, although the construction is certainly harsh. Or the words might be taken as a continuation of the relative clause, thus: "And as for... mattock, *whither no fear of thorns, &c. used to come*, it shall be, &c." This is perhaps preferable.

for the sending forth of oxen] i.e. a place where oxen are sent forth (cf. ch. xxxii. 20). *the treading* (ch. v. 5) *of lesser cattle* (R.V. **sheep**).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAP. VII. 14—16.

Probably no single passage of the Old Testament has been so variously interpreted or has given rise to so much controversy as the prophecy contained in these verses. The difficulties arise mainly from the fact that while the terms of the prediction are so indefinite as to admit a wide range of possibilities, we have no record of its actual fulfilment in any contemporary event. The purpose of this note will be to indicate the chief lines along which a solution has been sought for, and to consider how far they satisfy the conditions of a reasonable historical exegesis. But before entering on this survey, it will be well to enquire what sort of fulfilment the context would lead us to expect, or in other words what kind of sign would serve the immediate objects of the prophet's mission to Ahaz.

We are not entitled to assume as a matter of course that the sign here given will be in all respects such a sign as Ahaz might have asked at an earlier stage of the interview (v. 11). In the first place it need not involve an objective miracle, although a miracle of the most stupendous order was originally put within the option of Ahaz. Any of the senses in which the word "sign" is used (see on v. 11) in connexion with a prediction, would satisfy the requirements of v. 14. But further there is a presumption that the *import* of the sign will have been changed by what has taken place in the interval. Isaiah's first message to Ahaz is an unqualified assurance of deliverance from the designs of Rezin and Pekah, and the sign first offered would be a sign of that and that alone. The prospect of an Assyrian invasion was no doubt in the background of the prophet's horizon, but his message to Ahaz is complete in itself and takes no account of that final catastrophe. It is manifest, however, that in Isaiah's mind the whole aspect of affairs is altered by the king's refusal. The Assyrian invasion is brought into immediate connexion with the attack of the allies, and a new forecast of the future is presented by the prophet in which three great events follow closely on one another: (1) the collapse of the project of the allied princes, (2) the total destruction of Syria and Ephraim by the Assyrians, and (3) the devastation of Judah by the same ruthless conquerors. And the most natural supposition is that the new sign will be an epitome of this new and darker outlook, that is to say it will be a pledge at once of the immediate deliverance and of the judgment that lies behind it. Indeed

this view is so obviously implied by vv. 14—16 that we are shut up to it unless, with some critics, we remove v. 15 as an interpolation.

Now there are three features of the prediction in which the import of the sign may be looked for: (i) the birth of the child, (ii) his name, and (iii) his history. And of these three the last is certainly an essential element of the prophecy, as is shewn by vv. 15, 16. With regard to the other two we can only say that it is antecedently improbable that either of them should be without some special significance.

(i) If the import of the sign be sought mainly in the *birth* of the child it becomes almost necessary to assume that the terms of the prophecy point to something extraordinary and mysterious in the circumstances of the birth. This is the case with the traditional Christian interpretation, which finds in it a direct prediction of the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mother of our Lord. The chief support of this view has always been the authority of the Evangelist Matthew, who cites v. 14 in relating the birth of Jesus (i. 22, 23). But it must be observed that such a citation is not decisive as to the *original* sense of the passage, any more than Matt. ii. 15 determines the original sense of Hos. xi. 1. The great difficulty of the interpretation is that such an event could by no means serve the purpose of a sign to Ahaz. It may be freely admitted, in view of v. 11, that the expectation of a parthenogenesis is not too bold to be attributed to Isaiah in this moment of ecstatic inspiration. But if this be granted on the one hand it must be conceded on the other that he expected the miracle to be wrought in the immediate future; his language ("a virgin is about to conceive") implies that the prediction is on the eve of fulfilment, and the assurance in v. 16 is nugatory if the promised sign was not to happen for more than 700 years. Moreover, such an idea would require to be unambiguously expressed, and we have seen that the word '*almāh*' does not connote virginity in the strict sense. Whatever element of truth, therefore, may underlie this exegesis, it can scarcely be held to afford an adequate solution of the problem presented by the oracle in its primary and historical application.

(ii) Another class of explanations regards the event as a sign to Ahaz and nothing more, and of these we may examine first those which find the chief significance of the sign in the *naming* of the child. Perhaps the most persuasive presentation of this view is that given by Duhm. According to that expositor, the '*almāh*' is any young mother who may give birth to a child in the hour of Judah's deliverance from Syria and Ephraim. "God (is) with us" will be the spontaneous exclamation of child-bearing women in that time; and to such utterances at the moment of birth a certain oracular significance was attached, which caused them to be perpetuated in the name of the child. The child (or children) bearing the name Immanuel will grow up as a sign to Ahaz, first of the genuineness of Isaiah's inspiration, who foretold the event, and second of the yet future judgment threatened on the same occasion and his own rejection by Jehovah. To this theory no exception can be taken on grammatical or historical grounds. It is undoubtedly rendered easier by the excision of v. 15, which Duhm advocates. If that verse be retained one feels that the sign is rather overloaded by a circumstance which is

directly opposed to the meaning of the name. And apart from this there will perhaps remain an impression that justice has not been done to the emphasis with which the birth is announced. Why, on this view, should the mother be an *'almāh*—a young woman?

(iii) A third view (not to be sharply distinguished from ii) lays stress not so much on the birth or the naming as on the *history* of the child, which becomes a sort of chronological thread on which political events are strung. The meaning is: before the birth of a certain child Judah will have experienced a great deliverance (*v.* 14), before he has emerged from infancy, Syria and Ephraim will have disappeared (*v.* 16) and at a later stage of his development the land of Judah will be reduced to a pastoral wilderness (*v.* 15). An interesting parallel is found in the child Pollio in Vergil's fourth Eclogue, and another from the life of Mohammed has been lately pointed out by Mr Bevan¹. And as in these two cases a particular child is the subject of the sign, so here expositors have hazarded several guesses as to the identity of the *'almāh*. She has been supposed to be (*a*) the wife of Isaiah, either the mother of Shear-jashub, or a second wife (some identifying Immanuel with Maher-shalal-hash-baz, *ch.* viii. 3), (*b*) a damsel in the harem of Ahaz (the mother of Hezekiah is excluded by the chronology), or (*c*) a young woman among the bystanders, indicated by a gesture. None of these conjectures can be pronounced altogether happy. They are all alike discredited by a certain touch of vulgarity implied in the designation of some known individual as "the damsel."

An ingenious modification of the last two theories recently propounded by an American writer², differs from all others in excluding the prospect of deliverance from the import of the sign, whose significance is found in the *contrast* between the name of the child and his history. The name Immanuel embodies the religious optimism of the king and nation, their false trust in the protection of Jehovah; the hardships through which the child passes symbolise the providential course of events under which this delusive confidence must collapse. This interpretation, however, requires the excision of at least the latter part of *v.* 16, and also the rejection of *ch.* viii. 9, 10 as spurious.

(iv) Another line of exegesis which has commended itself to a large number of modern expositors starts from the idea that here for the first time the figure of the *personal Messiah* is flashed on Isaiah's mind. On this view the prophecy is invested with profound religious significance, which is not the case with the two last-mentioned theories. Face to face with the craven-hearted monarch who had betrayed his trust as guardian of the liberty and independence of Judah, the prophet receives this revelation of the true King, as one born to his people in the hour

¹ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1893, pp. 220 ff. The incident is that of a Jew who was discoursing to an Arab tribe at Medina about the resurrection and the last judgment. "'But,' said they, 'what is the *sign* (āyat, Hebr. אֵימָנָה) of this?' 'A prophet,' he answered, 'sent from that country yonder,' pointing with his hand towards Mecca and Yemen. 'But when,' they asked, 'do you think he will come?' Then he looked at me and said, 'If this boy reaches the full term of life, he will see him.' And in fact before another day had passed God sent His Apostle to dwell among us, and we believed on him, &c."

² F. C. Porter, in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. xiv. 1895, pp. 19—36.

of danger, sharing their poverty and affliction in his youth and waiting the time when "the government shall be upon his shoulder" and the perfect kingdom of God shall be established (ix. 6). The attention is concentrated on the mysterious personality of the child, that of the mother falls into the background. She may be some unknown daughter of the royal house, or a nameless maiden of lowly rank; the essential fact is that in the speedy advent of Immanuel, in his name, in his experience, men will recognise the God-given "sign" of the truth of the prophet's words. This on the whole seems to be the theory which affords the most adequate solution of the complex difficulties of the passage. It satisfies the claims of a truly historical interpretation, and at the same time it accounts, as none of the other modern theories do, for the impassioned fervour, the indefinable atmosphere of mystery and emotion with which the words are surrounded. It is no objection to it that the anticipation remained an unrealised ideal long after the opportunity for a sign to Ahaz had passed away; for a similar remark applies to the whole conception of a personal Messiah, whose appearance Isaiah certainly expected to synchronise with the Assyrian invasion. Not the least of its recommendations, indeed, is the fact that it brings this prophecy into line with the other great Messianic prophecies of ch. ix. 1-7 and xi. 1 ff.; and if the last words of ch. viii. 8 are rightly rendered "thy land, O Immanuel" (which however has been disputed, see on the verse below) a link would be supplied which would make the proof almost irresistible, since no ordinary child, born or unborn, could be naturally apostrophised as the owner of the land.

(v) An *allegorical* interpretation of the prophecy has been advanced by a few scholars, the "virgin" being taken as a personification of the Davidic house, or of the religious community, and the child either as the Messiah, or as a figure of the new generation; or else the birth is explained as merely a general symbol of deliverance. But all this is purely fanciful.

A few words may be added in conclusion on the pre-Christian acceptance of the passage. From a very early time it seems to have been recognised that a certain mystery clung to the words, that their significance was not exhausted by the circumstances in which they were originally spoken, but that they had an eschatological reference, pointing forward to the birth of the Messiah, as the wonderful event on which all the hope of the future hung. The first trace of this tendency is found in Mic. v. 3: "therefore will he (Jehovah) give them up until the time when a (certain) travailing woman hath brought forth, &c." These words can hardly be explained otherwise than as a reference to Is. vii. 14; and if it were certain that they were written by a contemporary of Isaiah they would go far to determine the sense in which the earlier prophecy should be understood. Since, however, they belong to a part of the book of Micah whose age is disputed, they may possibly represent a secondary application of Isaiah's prophecy rather than its primary intention. A further advance in the same direction appears to be indicated by the rendering of our passage in the LXX. It is almost incredible that the use of the word *παρθένος* for '*almāh*' in so important a connexion should be due to mere laxity on the part

of the translator. More probably it expresses a belief current in Jewish circles that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin. A good deal of evidence has been adduced to shew that such an expectation actually prevailed amongst both Alexandrian and Palestinian Jews¹, and if it existed it could hardly fail to influence the exegesis of this prophecy. It was only when the prophecy was appealed to by the Christians in proof of the Messiahship of Jesus that the Jewish exegetes seem finally to have repudiated the Messianic interpretation. They refused to admit that the word *'almāh* could properly be translated "virgin" and fell back on one or other of the theories mentioned under (iii). The Christian Fathers on the other hand resolutely upheld the correctness of the LXX., although the post-Christian Greek versions of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus agree in rendering the word by *veāvis*. The patristic view maintained an all but unquestioned ascendancy within the Church till the dawn of historical criticism in the eighteenth century, when it began to be recognised that on the philological question the Jews were right.

CHAP. VIII. 1—18. FURTHER ORACLES FROM THE TIME
OF THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITISH WAR.

The passage may be analysed as follows:—

i. *vv.* 1—4. The prophet, having utterly failed to influence the policy of the court (ch. vii. 1—17) is directed by Jehovah to impress his divinely inspired view of the situation on the public mind by two significant actions. First, he is to place in some conspicuous position a large tablet bearing in legible characters the ominous inscription LMHRSHLLHSHBZ; at the same time giving legal formality to the transaction by taking two prominent citizens as witnesses. Then the explanation of the word is given in connexion with the naming of a son born to him soon afterwards. It is a prophecy of the speedy overthrow of Ephraim and Syria by the king of Assyria. These actions are only intelligible at a time when the prediction was contrary to common expectation; hence they were performed *certainly* before the conquest of Damascus (732), and *probably* also before the embassy of Ahaz to Tiglath-pileser (2 Ki. xvi. 7).

ii. *vv.* 5—8. A prediction of the Assyrian invasion of Judah. The people who despise the softly flowing waters of Shiloah (the symbol of Jehovah's invisible presence and government) shall be inundated by the waters of the Euphrates (a figure for the might of Assyria).

iii. *vv.* 9, 10. An oracle of very different import from the preceding. In an apostrophe to the nations of the world the prophet announces the frustration of all plans and combinations directed against the sovereign rule of Jehovah on mount Zion.

iv. *vv.* 11—15. Isaiah relates how in an hour of ecstasy he had experienced the strong pressure of the divine hand on his spirit, holding him aloof from the currents of public opinion which flowed around him, and constraining him to regulate his attitude by the constant thought of

¹ See Mr F. P. Badham's letter in the *Academy* of 8 June, 1895.

Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz. And I took unto me faithful witnesses 2

God's presence; and along with this there were revealed to him the awful consequences of stumbling heedlessly against the purposes of Jehovah.

v. vv. 16—18. The prophet recognises that a chapter of his ministry has now closed. He is conscious that Jehovah has withdrawn the gracious guidance of the prophetic word which the nation has so emphatically rejected; and therefore he retires within the circle of his own adherents to wait for the fulfilment of his words. To these "disciples" he commits a record of the prophecies delivered during the crisis, while to the unbelieving people Jehovah has given pledges of His word in the names of the prophet and his two children.

It would be a mistake to look for a close logical connexion between these sections. They form a series of detached oracles, which followed each other at intervals like lightning flashes, illuminating for us the darkness of the political situation. Along with ch. vii. and probably also ch. vi., they constitute no doubt the chief part of the "testimony" which Isaiah "sealed up" among his disciples.

1—4. The twofold sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

1. Comp. ch. xxx. 8; Hab. ii. 2. *a great roll] a great tablet* (R.V.). The word is used in ch. iii. 23 of polished metal mirrors; here it means a smooth flat tablet of wood, stone or metal.

with a man's pen] i.e. "in common characters" (R.V. marg.) easily legible and understood by the people (Hab. ii. 2). Such a direction bears witness to an extensive knowledge of writing in Isaiah's time. The famous inscription in the Siloam tunnel, belonging probably to this age, is thought to have been carved by the workmen for their amusement.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz] That is, "**Haste-spoil-speed-booty.**" Syntactically the enigmatic legend is capable of more than one construction. Most probably the verbs are participles; and then the nouns may be either nominative to them, or in the accusative of direction. I.e. we may translate either "Spoil hasteneth—booty speedeth" or "Hasting to (the) spoil—speeding to (the) booty." The last seems preferable. (Comp. Goethe's *Raufebold*, *Habebold*, *Eilebeute* in the second part of *Faust*.)

concerning] is in Hebr. simply "to" or "for," a formula of dedication common on seals and epitaphs. The tablet relates to **Maher-shalal-hash-baz.**

2. *And I took]* The Hebr. pointing gives **and I will take** (as in R.V.). The speaker is still Jehovah. The LXX. and other old versions have the imperative ("and take for me") which, as addressed to the prophet, reads more naturally. Uriah the priest is mentioned in 2 Ki. xvi. 10 ff.; Zechariah is unknown, although the name occurs in the nearly contemporary notices of 2 Chron. xxvi. 5; xxix. 13. He has even been identified, somewhat rashly, with the author of Zech. ix.—xi.

to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of
 1 Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess; and she
 conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me,
 4 Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child
 shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother,
 the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be
 taken away before the king of Assyria.

5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,
 6 Forsomuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah
 that go softly,
 And rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

on the ground of Zech. i. 1. It is not to be inferred that the two men were intimate friends of Isaiah, still less that they belonged to the band of his disciples (v. 16); they are called to witness simply as responsible public persons, trusted by the people.

3. *the prophetess*] Isaiah's wife is so called, not because she herself possessed the prophetic gift, but because the husband's designation is transferred by courtesy to the wife;—as a German might have said “die Frau Prophetin.”

4. The period here indicated, about a year, is of course shorter than in ch. vii. 16, the date of the prediction being about a year later.

5—8. The Assyrian invasion of Judah threatened.

6. *the waters of Shiloah*] According to Delitzsch the older and correct pronunciation is *Shillôah*. The *pool* of Siloam (Neh. iii. 15; John ix. 7, now called ‘*Ain Silwân*’) was situated on the south-west side of the Temple Mount, at the lower end of the Tyropœon valley. From a very ancient time it has been connected, by a rock-hewn tunnel, with an intermittent spring (St Mary's well) on the opposite (eastern) side of the hill, outside the wall. If this work had been executed before Isaiah's day there could be no reasonable doubt that it is referred to here. The name (from a verb meaning “send” John ix. 7) suggests an artificial channel, and the expression “that go softly” exactly describes the flow of the water along the easy gradient of the tunnel. Its execution, however, is very generally assigned to Hezekiah, on the ground of 2 Ki. xx. 20; 2 Chr. xxxii. 30; Eccus. xlviii. 17. Whether this or some still more ancient aqueduct be intended, the point of the metaphor is that the waters, flowing “fast by the oracle of God,” are a type (not of the Davidic dynasty, but) of the silent unobtrusive presence and majesty of Jehovah, who “dwells in mount Zion” (v. 18: cf. Ps. xlv. 4).

and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son] If the text and translation be right, we must assume either (a) that “this people” does not refer to Judah, but to Ephraim or Ephraim and Syria together; or (b) that the people of Judah were secretly disaffected towards the house of David and sympathised with the design of the allied kings. But (a) “this people” most naturally means those who had refused the waters of Shiloah, the

Now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon ,
them

The waters of the river, strong and many,
Even the king of Assyria, and all his glory :

And he shall come up over all his channels,

And go over all his banks :

And he shall pass through Judah ;

He shall overflow and go over,

He shall reach *even* to the neck ;

And the stretching out of his wings shall fill the
breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

8

people amongst whom the prophet was living (as in vv. 11, 12), i.e. the inhabitants of Judah ; while (b) is a supposition not probable in itself, and at variance with vii. 2, viii. 12. We might retain the present text and translate "rejoice *with* Rezin, &c.," i.e. rejoice in the same kind of things as Rezin, &c. rejoice in ; but this is extremely forced. The most likely explanation is that there has been a confusion between two words of similar sound ; and that what the prophet really wrote was not "rejoice in" but "faint before" (*msôs* instead of *msôs*). This presents itself as the easiest solution, although it may possibly require a change of the following preposition (perhaps *mippnê* instead of *'êth*). Render, therefore, **and faint before Rezin, &c.** (cf. v. 12 and ch. vii. 2).

7. *Now therefore*] lit. "and therefore," introducing the apodosis ; a combination not found elsewhere.

bringeth up upon them] Not North Israel, but Judah, "this people."
the waters of the river] The Euphrates, explained in the next clause as a symbol of the Assyrian power. The figure of the verse is based on the fact that in summer the Euphrates overflows its banks,—an obvious emblem of the aggressive policy of the great world-power.

8. *And he shall pass through Judah*] Better as R.V., **And he shall sweep onward into Judah.** *overflow* and *go over* are rightly taken as synonyms (not as R.V.).

shall reach even to the neck] (cf. xxx. 28). Judah is in the utmost extremity of danger, yet is not wholly submerged.

shall fill...land] lit. "shall be the filling (as in ch. vi. 3) of the breadth of thy land." "Wings" cannot mean "masses of water branching off from the main current"; nor is there any evidence that the Hebrews spoke of the "wings" of an army, as we do. The figure of the deluge seems abruptly changed to that of a huge bird of prey, overshadowing the whole land with its extended wings.

of thy land, O Immanuel] Without any change of the original consonantal text we might read, as at the end of v. 10, "...of the land. For with us is God!" The change is perhaps not imperatively required even if Immanuel be an ordinary child ; whereas, on the view that he is the Messiah, the apostrophe becomes natural. Still there remains a suspicion that the last part may be a gloss introduced from v. 10.

Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces;

And give ear, all ye of far countries:

Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces;

Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought;

Speak the word, and it shall not stand:

For God *is* with us.

For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand,
And instructed me that *I* should not walk in the way
of this people, saying,

Say ye not, A confederacy,

9, 10. The challenge of faith to the combined nations of the world. Cf. Ps. ii. 1—6.

9. *Associate yourselves*] Rather: **Be exasperated**. A.V. follows the Targum and Vulgate, whose translation is based on a wrong grammatical analysis of the word (the root being *rā'a'*, not *rā'āh*).

and ye shall be broken in pieces] Lit.: **and be dismayed**,—a consecutive imperative (Davidson, *Synt.* § 64), forming the apodosis of a conditional sentence.

gird yourselves] for battle against the cause of Jehovah.

10. *Take counsel...nought*] "If ye resolve on a scheme it shall be frustrated." *Speak the word*] **a word**, i.e. "proclaim your resolution."

For God is with us] See on v. 8.

11—15. Isaiah was able to stand alone against the nation during this crisis, because he knew that his thoughts were controlled by a Power not his own.

11. *with a strong hand*] Better: **while the Hand** (of Jehovah) **grasped (me)**, (an infinitive construction). The phrase (cf. Ezek. iii. 14) refers to a prophetic trance, in which the true view of the aspects and issue of the situation was borne in upon Isaiah's mind with irresistible force. His mind was as it were fixed in one direction, and he was henceforth proof against the disturbing influences of social opinion around him.

and instructed me...walk] Or, **to warn me against walking**. Grammatically, the clause is a continuation, not of the main sentence ("and Jehovah spake, &c."), but of the infinitive construction, which is here resolved into the Imperfect (Qal). *the way of this people*] the prevailing emotions, thoughts and resolves of the hour.

12. *A confederacy*] Strictly: **A conspiracy** (R.V.). But the word "conspiracy" does not necessarily imply (as some have thought) treason within the state. It may be used (as the verb is in Neh. iv. 2) of an external coalition threatening the integrity of the commonwealth. On the whole this seems to give the best sense here. The "conspiracy" is the Syro-Ephraimitish alliance, which Isaiah and his adherents are

To all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy;

Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; 13

And *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread.

And he shall be for a sanctuary; 14

But for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel,

For a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and 15
be broken,

warned not to treat as a serious danger. Another explanation is that Isaiah and his party were suspected of treasonable complicity in the designs of the allies (cf. Jer. xxxvii. 13); but did they need a supernatural revelation to tell them that that charge was false? The word has also been supposed to allude to the spirit of preternatural suspicion that was abroad, causing every man to suspect his neighbour of being a traitor. But Isaiah is little likely to have been disturbed by this.

neither fear ye their fear] i.e. "fear not what they fear," but fear Jehovah alone (v. 13).

13. Render: **Jehovah of Hosts, Him shall ye count holy, and let Him be (the object of) your fear and (of) your terror.** "Count holy" (xxix. 23); recognise as the Holy One, especially by absolute trust in His providential disposition of events; fearing only what would offend Him.

14. To those who obey this admonition, Jehovah *shall be for a sanctuary*; to all others a stumbling-stone. This contrast would certainly be clearer if (with the Targ. and Vulg.) we might insert "to you" after "shall be." But the want of these words hardly justifies us in changing the text, or even in translating "He will shew Himself a holy object," in the sense explained by the remainder of the verse. Although it is doubtful if the word is ever used for "asylum," yet the sanctuary was in fact an asylum (Ex. xxi. 14; 1 Ki. i. 50, ii. 28, 30), and there is no great improbability in supposing that that idea is expressed here.

Two figures are used to set forth the threatening side of Jehovah's relation to *both the houses of Israel*: the *stone* against which one heedlessly stumbles to one's own destruction; and the *snare* in which a wild animal is caught unawares. Jehovah is a secret and sudden danger to those who walk in blind unbelief. Cf. Ps. xviii. 26.

15. *many among them*] Not all; a "Remnant shall turn" and be saved: *how*, is more fully shewn in the next verses. The expressions of this verse are reproduced with little variation in ch. xxviii. 13. They are frequently alluded to in the N.T. (Luke ii. 34; Matt. xxi. 44; Rom. ix. 33).

And be snared, and be taken.

6 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

7 And I will wait upon the LORD,
That hideth his face from the house of Jacob,
And I will look for him.

8 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD
hath given me
Are for signs and for wonders in Israel

16—18. The prophet, recognising the failure of his work as regards the nation, prepares a written record of his teaching, and deposits this as a sealed document in the custody of his disciples. By this solemn act he forms an inner circle of religious fellowship, which is the nucleus of the new people of God. See General Intro. p. xxxi.

16. Cf. ch. xxx. 8; Dan. xii. 4. *Bind up...seal*] The imperatives can only be understood as a command of Jehovah to Isaiah, as in vv. 1 ff. But in the next verse Isaiah himself is the speaker, and since the change of person is somewhat abrupt, the suggestion deserves consideration that the two verbs are *infs. abs.* (wrongly vocalised). We might then translate: "(I will) bind up...(I will) seal."

the testimony...the law] *testimony...instruction* (see on i. 10). Both words are here used of the contents of the revelations communicated to the prophet during these months of danger and anxiety; the former describes more particularly the evidential character of the predictions, the latter refers to the practical element in the revelation (as in vii. 4—9, viii. 11—13).

among my disciples] i.e. those who had received the prophet's message, and rallied round him as their spiritual guide.

17. *that hideth his face...*] A very common expression for Jehovah's anger: Deut. xxxi. 17 f.; Mic. iii. 4; Jer. xxxiii. 5; Ps. xiii. 1, xlv. 24; Job xiii. 24, &c. The special mark of displeasure which Isaiah has in view is the cessation of those admonitions and warnings which Jehovah had sent through him to the people.

will look for him] Better: *will hope in Him*. The counsel which the nation and the king rejected becomes the rule of the prophet's own life.

18. *I and the children whom the LORD hath given me*] Like Hosea, Isaiah had been directed to embody leading ideas of his teaching in the names of at least two of his children, *Shear-jashub* and *Mahe-shalal-hash-baz*. His own name, also, though not an uncommon one, expresses what we may regard as the most comprehensive idea of his theology—"Jehovah saves." He and they are thus **for signs and portents** (cf. ch. xx. 3 and see on vii. 11) in Israel; the children especially cannot be seen or named without recalling to mind prophetic utterances of profound import.

From the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them ¹⁹
that have familiar spirits,
And unto wizards that peep, and that mutter :

which dwelleth in mount Zion] This conception seems to have first emerged in Isaiah's teaching at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war, when Jerusalem was threatened by a foreign army. We have here perhaps the earliest anticipation of what became afterwards a fixed element of his prophecy—the inviolability of Jerusalem, the earthly seat of Jehovah's throne.

CHAP. VIII. 19—IX. 7. ESOTERIC PROPHECIES OF THE FUTURE
ADDRESSED TO ISAIAH'S DISCIPLES.

The prophet, having now discontinued and "sealed up" his public "testimony," appears to address himself in what follows to his own immediate followers. The passage presents, in vivid contrast, two pictures; one of the darkness and despair that are settling down on the incorrigible nation, the other of the light and joy that are to break upon it with the advent of the Messianic salvation. "The morning cometh and also the night" (ch. xxi. 12).

i. *vv. 19—22.* The night of despair and affliction. The whole of this section is unusually obscure, but two features can be clearly recognised, corresponding to the double prophecy in ch. vi. 9—12.

(1) Spiritual darkness, the people resorting to necromancy, &c., in default of a true revelation (19, 20). This we may regard as a symptom of the last stage of the hardening of heart foretold in vi. 9 f.

(2) Outward distress: men roaming through a dreary land, maddened by hunger, and seeking relief in vain (21, 22). The fulfilment of vi. 11 f.

Ch. ix. 1 (in the Hebr. viii. 23) is a transition verse.

ii. Ch. ix. 2—7. The dawn of the Messianic age.

(1) The light and joy of the great deliverance (2, 3).

(2) The manner of the deliverance: the overthrow of the Assyrian tyrant (4, 5).

(3) The advent of the Messianic King (6, 7).

19, 20. Religion and superstition contrasted.

19. *And when they* (the infatuated, God-forsaken people) *shall say unto you* (believers in divine revelation).

them that have familiar spirits] Hebr. simply *hā'ōbbōth*. Strictly, the *'ōbbh* is the "familiar spirit" itself (Lev. xx. 27, &c.), i.e. the disembodied spirit after death; the necromancer or "medium" through whom it holds communication with the living is *ba'al 'ōbbh* or *ba'alath 'ōbbh* (1 Sam. xxviii. 8)—the possessor of an *'ōbbh*.

wizards that peep, and that mutter] "Wizards," lit. "knowing ones," practitioners of an occult science. *Peep* (i.e. chirp) *and mutter* refer to the

Should not a people seek unto their God?

For the living to the dead?

20 To the law and to the testimony:

If they speak not according to this word,

It is because *there is* no light in them.

21 And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry:

And it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves,

And curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22 And they shall look unto the earth;

faint voice, like that of a little bird, which antiquity ascribed to the shades of the departed: "The sheeted dead did *squeak* and *gibber* in the streets of Rome." See ch. xxix. 4, where the word "peep" is again used, and comp. Aen. VI. 492 f.; Il. XXIII. 101. The LXX. (τοὺς ἐν-γαστριμύθους and οἱ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας φωνοῦσιν) suggests that the voice of the ghost was imitated by ventriloquism, which is not unlikely.

should not a people...dead?] This seems to be the answer which the prophet's disciples are to return to the people.

for the living to the dead?] i.e. "should one enquire of the dead (ghost) on behalf of the living?"

20. *To the law and to the testimony*] See on v. 16. Apparently an exclamation of the distracted people (see on next clause).

The remainder of the verse, where the construction is very difficult, ought probably to be rendered: **surely they shall speak according to this word when there is no dawn** (i.e. no hope) **for them** (lit. **him**). The meaning is that the people will seek direction from the "sure word of prophecy," but only when it is too late. But the original is so obscure that no great confidence can be placed in any translation.

21, 22. Another scene, representing the utter desolation of the land, and the miseries of the survivors.

21. *they shall pass through it*] Obviously, the land; but something must have fallen out before this verse, to account for the reference of the pronoun. Throughout this and the following verse, "they," "their," "themselves," should be "he," "his," "himself." The subject is either the whole nation or an individual Israelite. He wanders through the land, perhaps seeking an oracle (Am. viii. 12).

they shall fret themselves] Better: **he shall break out in anger** (the form is used only here).

curse his king and his God] Not "his king and God" whether Jehovah or a false god; but the king because he cannot, and God because He will not, help. Cf. 2 Ki. vi. 26 f. (see also 1 Ki. xxi. 10). This gives a much better sense than "curse *by* his king and his God," although the parallel passages are in favour of the latter translation.

22. The last words of the previous verse should be taken along with this one: **and he shall look upward and shall look to the earth: and**

And behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish;
And *they shall be driven to darkness.*

Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in 9
her vexation,

When at the first he lightly afflicted the land of
Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

And afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the
way of the sea,

Beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

behold, &c. Whether he look to heaven or earth, no ray of hope shall appear (cf. ch. v. 30).

trouble and darkness...] Render with R.V. **distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish.** The word here translated "gloom" is slightly different in form from that in ix. 1, and does not occur again.

and they shall...darkness] Probably: **and he shall be chased into thick darkness.** A somewhat similar phrase in Jer. xxiii. 12. Others render: "and darkness shall be driven (upon him)"; others: "but (the) darkness shall be dispelled."

IX. 1. *Nevertheless...vexation*] Lit. **For (there is) no gloom to her that (is) in straitness.** The sentence is an enigma. Duhm translates it as a question and regards it as the gloss of a reader who with difficulty had made up his mind that the "gloom" is metaphorical and justified his conclusion thus: "For is there not gloom to (a land) that is in straits?" It is a nice question whether the ancient scholiast or the modern commentator displays the greater subtlety here. If the words are retained in the text we must supply a different tense in the two members, as R.V. "But (for) there *shall be* no gloom to her that *was* in anguish."

when at the first...more grievously afflict her] Begin a new sentence and render as R.V. **In the former time he brought into contempt... but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, &c.,** or (since the words for "land" have the acc. termination), "brought contempt on the land...brought honour to it." The subject is Jehovah.

the land of Zebulun...Naphtali] Lower and Upper Galilee.

the way of the sea] either "in the direction of the (Mediterranean) Sea," or "the region along the West side of the Sea of Gennesareth." In the time of the Crusades *Via Maris* was the name of the road leading from Acre to Damascus.

beyond Jordan] the land of Gilead (2 Ki. xv. 29).

in Galilee of the nations] (omit "in") **the circuit of the nations.** Although the Hebrew word (*Gālîl*) is the origin of the later "Galilee," the district to which it was applied in the O.T. was only the northernmost corner of what was afterwards Upper Galilee (see 1 Ki. ix. 11; Josh. xx. 7, xxi. 32; 2 Ki. xv. 29).

These remote provinces are singled out for special mention because they were the first to be depopulated by Tiglath-pileser (2 Ki. xv. 29),

- 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen
a great light:
They that dwell in the land of the shadow of
death, upon them hath the light shined.
- 3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, *and* not increased
the joy:
They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest,
And as *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil.
- 4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the
staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor, as *in* the day of Midian.

those parts of the land, therefore, on which the reproach of foreign dominion will have lain longest when the Deliverance comes. The prophecy acquired a new and surprising significance when the "good news of the Kingdom" began to be proclaimed by our Lord first in Galilee (Matt. iv. 13 ff.). But the following verses (vv. 2—7) refer of course to the whole nation.

2, 3. The sudden change of style is remarkable; all at once the prophecy breaks into a strain of rapturous and animated poetry, which is sustained to the close. In the Hebr. ch. ix. begins here.

2. *have seen*] the perfects throughout are those of prophetic certainty; the writer is transported into the future.

the shadow of death] Heb. *ṣal-māvēth*, usually held by scholars to be a corruption of *ṣalmūth* (= "shadow" simply). But the traditional etymology is forcibly defended by Nöldeke in *Zeitschr. f. A.T. Wiss.*, 1897, pp. 183 f.

3. and *not increased the joy*] Lit., "unto it thou hast increased the joy." *Lō*, "not" and *lō*, "to it," being pronounced alike, are sometimes confused in the text of the O.T. There is no reason for assuming such a confusion here, and R.V. ("thou hast increased their joy") rightly adheres to the Massoretic text. But it is still better to adopt a very simple emendation, approved by many expositors (הגילה for הגילה) and translate: **Thou hast multiplied the exultation; thou hast increased the joy.**

before thee] as at the festivals in the sanctuary, a phrase often used in Deuteronomy (xii. 7, xiv. 26, &c.).

the joy in harvest] Ps. iv. 8, cxxvi. 5, 6.

as men rejoice when they divide the spoil] cf. ch. xxxiii. 23; Jud. v. 30; Ps. cxix. 162. For "rejoice" read **exult**.

4, 5. The destruction of the oppressor.

4. Change the order as in R.V. **For the yoke of his burden, &c.... thou hast broken.**

the staff of his shoulder] (better **back**) means the staff with which his back was beaten; the pronouns refer to Israel.

rod of his oppressor] **task-master**, as in Ex. v. 6.

in the day of Midian] when the dominion of the Midianites was forever broken (Jud. vii.; cf. Is. x. 26). "Day" here means "day of

For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, ⁵
 And garments rolled in blood;
 But *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire.
 For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given : ⁶
 And the government shall be upon his shoulder :
 And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
 The mighty God,

battle," as often in Arabic. The Arabs speak of the hero of many fights as *dhu-l'ayyāmīn*, "master of days."

5. The verse reads: For every boot of him that tramped noisily, and (every) garment rolled in blood, shall be for burning, as fuel for the fire. The word *šē'ôn* is Aramaic and signifies a military boot; that rendered "tramped" (*šō'ên*) is a denominative formed from it. The idea of the verse is that after Jehovah's great victory every vestige of war shall be burned up in preparation for the kingdom of universal peace. Comp. the burning of the weapons of Gog's host in Ezek. xxxix. 9 f.

6, 7. The last and greatest cause of joy is the birth of the Messiah and his wonderful character and government. When Isaiah expected the event to take place, cannot be gathered from this prophecy. There is no reason for supposing that the reference is to a child already born; the perfect tense is used, as throughout the passage, from the ideal standpoint of the writer, which is within the Messianic age. The birth of the child is most naturally conceived as taking place in the age of miracle which succeeds the overthrow of the Assyrian; hence no part is assigned to him in effecting the national emancipation.

6. *unto us*] the survivors of the judgment. Cf. "Immanuel," "God with us."

the government] This word is found only here and in v. 7, and is of uncertain interpretation, perhaps "princedom."

his name shall be called] The name of the Messiah consists of a series of honorific titles, pertaining to Him in His kingly capacity and expressing mainly the qualities displayed in His government. We may compare, with Guthe and others, the high-sounding titles assumed by Egyptian and Babylonian monarchs in their inscriptions, such as, "Giver of Life in perpetuity," "Ever Living," "Lord of Life," "Lord of Eternity and Infinity" &c.

Wonderful, Counsellor] Since each of the other names is compounded of two words, these expressions are also to be taken together as forming a single designation—**Wonder-Counsellor**. The construction is either construct followed by genitive—"a wonder of a Counsellor" (cf. Gen. xvi. 12), or acc. governed by participle—"one who counsels wonderful things." Cf. "wonderful in counsel" (of Jehovah) in ch. xxviii. 29. On counsel as the function of a king, see Mic. iv. 9.

The mighty God] (*'ēl Gibbôr*) either "God-like Hero" or **Hero-God**. The second is to be preferred, because the title is applied to Jehovah in ch. x. 21 (cf. Deut. x. 17; Jer. xxxii. 18). These two titles ascribe to

The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end,

Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,
To order it, and to stablish it with judgment and with justice

From henceforth even for ever.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

the Messiah the two fundamental virtues of a ruler, wisdom and strength (cf. ch. xi. 2), both in superhuman measure. The predicate of divinity (like that of eternity in the next name) is not to be understood in the absolute metaphysical sense; it means that the divine energy works through him and is displayed in his rule (cf. xi. 2 ff.; Mi. v. 4; Zech. xii. 8). In the fulfilment the words receive a larger sense.

The remaining two titles describe the character of the Messiah's government, as (a) paternal, and (b) peaceful.

The everlasting Father] lit. **Father of Eternity**. The translation "Father of booty" is grammatically unimpeachable (see ch. xxxiii. 23; Gen. xlix. 27), but the ideas of fatherhood and booty form an unnatural association. "Father of Eternity" describes the king, not as "possessor of the attribute of eternity" but as one who continually acts as a father to his people.

Prince of Peace] Cf. ch. ii. 2—4, xi. 4 ff.; Mic. v. 5; Zech. ix. 10.

7. The extension and consolidation of the Messiah's rule.

Of the increase...end] Rather, **For the increase of authority and for peace without end, &c.** The final M (□) in the original points to some uncertainty of text, which can also be traced in the translation of the LXX. It is thought by some to have arisen through dittography of the last two letters of v. 6; v. 7 would then begin "increased is authority." But the *Qêrê* gives the better sense.

upon the throne...kingdom] **On the throne and kingdom of David.** The Messiah succeeds to David's throne and is doubtless conceived as his lineal descendant.

to order it] Better, **to confirm it**. The throne is established (Prov. xx. 28; Is. xvi. 5) not by force and conquest but by the moral qualities of **judgment and righteousness** (see ch. i. 21) in the government.

the zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this] exactly as ch. xxxvii. 32. The word "zeal" or "jealousy" is used of *passion* in a variety of senses, but chiefly with the implied idea of *resentment*. When applied to Jehovah it appears always to express the reaction of His holiness called forth by some injury to His honour. Perhaps the closest parallel to the idea here is Zech. i. 14, viii. 2 "I am jealous *for* Zion with a great jealousy."

CHAP. IX. 8—X. 4 (+ V. 25—30).

JEHOVAH'S HAND STRETCHED OUT IN WRATH OVER HIS
PEOPLE. AN ORACLE AGAINST NORTH ISRAEL.

The key-note of the prophecy is given in the recurrent refrain—ix. 12, 17, 21, x. 4, v. 25. (On the reasons for including ch. v. 25—30 see on that passage.) It is the most artistically arranged of all Isaiah's writings, being divided into regular strophes as follows:—

(i) Ch. ix. 8—12. The introduction (vv. 8—10) explains that the oracle concerns the inhabitants of Samaria, and points to the buoyant assurance and self-confidence which was the habitual temper of the Northern Kingdom. The prophet then enters on a review of the various calamities by which Jehovah had sought to bring the nation to repentance, the first of these being the aggressions of its powerful neighbours on the East and the West (vv. 11, 12). This was the first stroke of Jehovah's hand.

(ii) vv. 13—17. A second blow descends on the impenitent nation in some sudden disaster by which the state is bereft of its leaders, great and small (13—16); the condition of the people is then seen to be utterly corrupt, so that Jehovah withdraws His compassion even from the helpless widows and orphans (17).

(iii) vv. 18—21. The third visitation is a state of anarchy and internecine strife, which is described mainly in a succession of powerful and telling images. The nation is rent by the conflict of rival factions, the only bond of unity being a common hatred of Judah.

(iv) Ch. x. 1—4. The fourth strophe opens with a "Woe" on the maladministration of the judges, which was always to Isaiah's mind the chief symptom of a rotten republic (vv. 1, 2). This is followed by an allusion to a day of slaughter in which the magnates shall vainly seek safety beneath the slain (3, 4).

[It is possible that another strophe originally stood here, the closing words of which are preserved in v. 25.]

(v) Ch. v. 26—30. The prediction of the Assyrian invasion forms, as has been already explained, the *dénouement* of this great drama of judgment. (For the exegesis, see on the passage above, pp. 40—42.) The refrain is of course dropped; Jehovah's wrath is stayed, His hand is no longer stretched forth.

It is assumed in the foregoing analysis that the passage is in the main (down at least to the end of ch. ix.) a *retrospect* of historical judgments; and this is the view naturally suggested by the tenses of the original, which are with few exceptions perfects, or the equivalents of perfects. A majority of commentators, however, taking the perfects as those of prophetic certainty, interpret the oracle as an ideal delineation of the stages of a judgment yet to come. And it is no doubt conceivable that the prophet might assume an ideal standpoint on the eve of the Assyrian invasion, regarding the preliminary chastisements as past, although they were in reality still future at the time of writing. But such a lavish and continuous use of the prophetic perfect would be unparalleled; and the change to the imperf. at v. 26 seems too significant to be explained on

- 8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob,
And it hath lighted upon Israel.
9 And all the people shall know,
Even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria,
That say in the pride and stoutness of heart,
10 The bricks are fallen down, but we will build *with*
hewn stones:

this hypothesis. It is, therefore, on the whole safer to assume that in ix. 8—21 the references are to past events, although it may not be possible in every case to specify the exact circumstances that are meant. A shorter oracle arranged on the principle here supposed is found in Am. iv. 6—12.

The date of the prophecy is not easily determined. The most probable view is that it was composed just before the outbreak of the Syro-Ephraimitish war. A later date (though not perhaps impossible) is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the issues of that expedition, so disastrous to the Northern Kingdom, are not mentioned. The Assyrians, moreover, are described in terms so vaguely poetic as to suggest that they were as yet unknown to the Israelites at close quarters. Syria also is mentioned as the enemy of Israel, without any hint of an alliance between them; while it is thought by some that v. 21 alludes to the incipient antagonism towards Judah which afterwards found vent in the invasion. None of these indications are very decisive, but there are none to neutralise them (see, however, on vv. 10 and 11 below); and the passage may at least be regarded provisionally as a product of the earliest period of Isaiah's ministry.

8—12. The first strophe (vv. 8—10 being an introduction to the whole prophecy).

8. Translate: **A word hath the Lord sent into Jacob and it shall light upon Israel.** "The Word is in nature and history the messenger of the Lord" (Del.) cf. Ps. cvii. 20, cxlvii. 15, 18; Is. lv. 11. The "word" here is the following oracle, which has already been "sent," and will "light" (cf. Dan. iv. 31) on Israel, bringing about its own fulfilment.

Jacob...Israel] here denote the Northern Kingdom, as is plain from the next verse.

9. *shall know*] i.e. by its effects; Hos. ix. 7.

that say] lit. "saying," i.e. "as follows." A verb seems to have dropped out; [**for they boast**] in pride and stoutness of heart saying.

10. It has been conjectured that these words are a fragment of a drinking song actually sung in Ephraim. They express the spirit of bravado which prevailed in the northern capital, cf. Am. vi. 13; Hos. vii. 9, 10. It is, therefore, not necessary to refer them to any particular recent reverses, such as the inroads of Assyria which punished the ill-timed attack on Judah. From the time of the Syrian wars there had been abundant "occasion to use this proverb in Israel."

hewn stones] Cf. Am. v. 11.

The sycomores are cut down, but we will change *them into* cedars.

Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of 11
Rezin against him,

And join his enemies together;

The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind;

12

And they shall devour Israel with open mouth.

For all this his anger is not turned away,

But his hand *is* stretched out still.

sycomores] The wood of the mulberry-fig, spongy but exceedingly durable, is still the cheapest and commonest building material in Palestine, cf. 1 Ki. x. 27.

11, 12. The first blow of Jehovah's hand—loss of territory.

11. *Therefore the LORD shall set up*] Transl. And (so) Jehovah exalted. *The adversaries of Rezin* must, if the text be correct, denote the Assyrians. But this is not a natural designation (especially if the prophecy was written *before* the Syro-Ephraimitish coalition); and it is inconsistent with v. 12, unless, indeed, we suppose that there Syrians are referred to as auxiliaries in the Assyrian army, which is extremely improbable. Several codd. read "princes of Rezin"; but this is hardly less objectionable. It seems necessary to delete "Rezin" as a gloss and read simply *his* (Israel's) *adversaries*.

and join...together] Rather, *and stirred up his enemies* (frequentative impf.) cf. ch. xix. 2.

12. *The Syrians...behind*] Or, *Syria on the East and the Philistines on the West* (R.V. marg.).

and they shall devour] and they devoured.

There is no historic record of Philistine aggression on the kingdom of Ephraim (at least since 1 Ki. xv. 27); nor is there any mention of a Syrian attack about the time when this passage was written. It is probable that the prophet is looking further back, to the protracted Syrian wars, from Ahab to Jeroboam II., which formed a distinct and memorable episode in the history of N. Israel.

For all this...stretched out still] "One of the most effective refrains that have ever been composed." (Duhm.) The figure of Jehovah, with His arm stretched out in wrath, is kept before the mind of the reader, as the prophecy advances to its conclusion.

13—17. Second strophe. It describes a "day" of terror (which may be either a battle or a revolution) in which the leaders of the people suddenly perished. What incident is referred to cannot be determined; royal assassinations were frequent after the death of Jeroboam II. (see 2 Ki. xv. 10, 14, 25), and these would naturally be accompanied by such a massacre of the King's supporters as is here spoken of (cf. ch. iii. 1—4). See also the graphic, though obscure, description of a conspiracy in Hos. vii. 3—7.

- 13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them,
Neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.
- 14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail,
Branch and rush, *in* one day.
- 15 The ancient and honourable, he *is* the head;
And the prophet that teacheth lies, he *is* the tail.
- 16 For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err;
And *they that are* led of them *are* destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men,
Neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows:
For every one *is* a hypocrite and an evildoer,
And every mouth speaketh folly.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand *is* stretched out still.

13. *For the people turneth not]* But the people turned not. *him*
that smiteth them] *him* that smote them. *do they seek]* *did*
they seek.

14. Render: And (so) Jehovah cut off from Israel head and tail, palm-branch and rush, in one day. *head and tail]* i.e. leader and follower, a proverbial expression, like the next phrase.

15 is almost universally regarded as an erroneous explanation of v. 14 and therefore a gloss; but this is not quite certain. False prophets were frequently guilty of following where they pretended to lead (1 Ki. xxii. 6; Ezek. xiii. 10) and might be very appropriately described as the "tail." The verse may be objected to on account of its somewhat prosaic character, but the strophe is not complete without it.

The ancient and honourable] see on iii. 2, 3.

16. Render: And the leaders of this people have become misleaders, and they of it that are led are swallowed up (or perhaps as iii. 12 confused).

17. A sentence of utter rejection. The unwonted severity of the threat against the widows and orphans is justified by the universal corruption of the nation.

a hypocrite] Rather, profane (R.V.), "impious." Cf. ch. x. 6, xxxii. 6, xxxiii. 14; Job viii. 13; Ps. xxxv. 16.

every mouth speaketh folly] ch. xxxii. 6 ("villany" A.V.). In the O.T. folly and wickedness are practically synonymous.

18—21. Third strophe. As in ch. iii. 1—7, the removal of the pillars of the state is followed by wild confusion and civil war. The state of things alluded to can be partly realised from passages in the book of Hosea, e.g. iv. 2, v. 11 f., vi. 8 f., vii. 7, x. 3, 13; and cf. 2 Ki. xv. 23—25.

For wickedness burneth as the fire:
 It shall devour the briers and thorns,
 And shall kindle in the thickets of the forest,
 And they shall mount up *like* the lifting up of smoke.
 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land ¹⁸
 darkened,
 And the people shall be as the fuel of the fire:
 No man shall spare his brother.
 And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; ²⁰
 And he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not
 be satisfied:
 They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:
 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: ²¹
And they together shall be against Judah.

18. The smouldering embers of wickedness burst out in a raging fire: see Hosea's image of the oven, vii. 4, 6.

For wickedness...thickets] Render, **For wickedness burned like a fire that consumes thorns and thistles, and it set fire to the thickets, &c.,** cf. x. 17, 18. Both wickedness and the punishment of it are likened to an unquenchable fire; Job xxxi. 12; Deut. xxxii. 22. First the thorns and thistles are kindled, then the fire catches the trees.

they shall mount...smoke] and they roll upward in a pillar of smoke; lit. "a lifting up of smoke." The word for "roll upward" does not occur again; it contains an alliteration with that for "thickets."

19. *darkened]* Another translation is "made to glow"; the word is not found elsewhere.

no man sparing his brother. The clause shews that the fire is an emblem of ungovernable party strife. The sense would be still clearer if we could adopt Duhm's hazardous emendation in the preceding clause so as to make it read "and the people became like man-eaters (cannibals)."

20. **And one snatched on the right hand and was hungry (still) and devoured on the left hand and they were not satisfied, &c.**

every man the flesh of his own arm] The image would be that of men maddened with hunger and gnawing their own flesh. The words are reproduced exactly, with the omission of a single letter, in Jer. xix. 9, which gives the sense "every man the flesh of his neighbour." It might be better to assimilate the text here to that reading, since it is the "cruelty of rival factions" that seems to be described.

21. *Manasseh, Ephraim...Manasseh]* Ancient tribal jealousies would naturally be revived in a period of anarchy and civil war. Something of this kind seems to be implied in the account of the accession of the usurper Pekah, who murdered Pekahiah, at the head of a band of fifty Gileadites (2 Ki. xv. 25). The tribal names, however, need not be taken quite literally; indeed it is hardly probable that the tribes had preserved their separate identity to so late a time.

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand *is* stretched out still.

- 10 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,
And that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed;
2 To turn aside the needy from judgment,
And to take away the right from the poor of my
people,
That widows may be their prey,
And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation,
And in the desolation *which* shall come from far?
To whom will ye flee for help?
And where will ye leave your glory?
4 Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners,
And they shall fall under the slain.

1-4. Fourth strophe. Most critics consider that at this point the scene changes from Samaria to Jerusalem; (1) because the internal condition of Ephraim has already been depicted in the last stages of dissolution and (2) because the abuses here denounced are a constant feature of Isaiah's prophecies against Judah. In the absence of positive indications these reasons are hardly sufficient to justify so abrupt a transition. It would be more plausible to hold with Giesebrecht and others that the strophe had its place originally among the "woes" of ch. v.; but this also seems unnecessary.

1. *that decree unrighteous decrees, &c.*] Better perhaps, **that draw up mischievous ordinances and are continually writing oppression**. The magnates are addressed not as judges but as legislators; their offence is that they embody injustice in arbitrary written enactments, which enable them to perpetrate the most grievous wrongs under legal forms.

and that write...prescribed] The construction is peculiar. The intensive form of the verb "to write" occurs only here.

2. The effect and real purpose of this legislative activity.

To turn aside the needy from judgment] See on ch. i. 23.
my people] as iii. 12, 15.

3. The unjust lawgivers are reminded that there is a day of revision, when they must answer to the Supreme Judge.

And what will ye do?] cf. Hos. ix. 5. *day of visitation*] cf. Hos. ix. 7; Mic. vii. 4; Jer. xi. 23, xxiii. 12, &c.

desolation] or, **storm**; the word is only employed here by Isaiah. The "storm" of invasion "comes from far"; cf. ch. v. 26, xxx. 27.

leave your glory] i.e. "your wealth"; Gen. xxxi. 1; Is. lxi. 6, lxvi. 12.

4. *Without me...slain*] This clause is very difficult. The easiest explanation perhaps is to take it as the answer to the questions of v. 3:

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand *is* stretched out still.

(they can do nothing) except crouch under the captives and fall under the slain. Another is "Except one (here and there) crouch among captives, they must fall under the slain." Objections to both occur readily enough to anyone who reads the Hebrew, especially the abrupt changes from singular to plural. An ingenious conjecture of Lagarde's gives the sense "Beltis crouches, Osiris is broken (בִּלְתִּי כָרַעַת; חַת אֲסִיר; cf. xlvi. 1; Jer. l. 2), they fall, &c."; i.e. the heathen gods shall be unable to give protection to their votaries. But there is no evidence that *Egyptian* deities (Osiris) were worshipped in Israel in Isaiah's time; and in any case their sudden introduction here would be surprising.

his hand is stretched out still] See on ch. v. 25 ff.

CHAP. X. 5—34.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD-POWER. AN ORACLE AGAINST ASSYRIA.

This great prophecy is the clearest and probably the earliest exposition of that conception of the divine government of the world which was the guiding principle of the latest period of Isaiah's ministry. The leading idea of the passage is the contrast between the mission assigned to Assyria in the scheme of Jehovah's Providence, and the ambitious policy of universal dominion cherished by the rulers of that Empire. Assyria was the instrument chosen by Jehovah to manifest His sole deity by the extinction of all the nationalities that put their trust in false gods. But the great world-power, intoxicated by its success, and attributing this to its own wisdom and resource, recognises no difference between Jehovah and other gods, but confidently reckons on proving His impotence by the subjugation of His land and people. Hence it becomes necessary for Jehovah to vindicate His supreme Godhead by the destruction of the power which has thus impiously transgressed the limits of its providential commission. And this judgment will take place at the very moment when Assyria seeks to crown its career of conquest by an assault on Jehovah's sanctuary on Mount Zion, the earthly seat of His government. These are the ideas which lay at the root of Isaiah's heroic faith in the crisis of Sennacherib's invasion. He did not doubt that Judah's sins required an exemplary chastisement, or that that chastisement would come by means of the Assyrians, but he had the firmest conviction that Jehovah's purpose did not include the violation of His sanctuary, which would in that age have been equivalent to the extinction of the true religion.

When was this prophecy written? Certainly between the years 717 and 701. The superior limit is given by the list of captured cities in v. 9. Carchemish, the latest conquest there mentioned, was incorpo-

rated in the Assyrian Empire (although, to be sure, it had been captured more than once previously) in 717, about five years after the fall of Samaria. The lower limit is of course the great invasion of 701.

But whether the oracle was uttered near the beginning, middle, or end of that period is a question on which no agreement has yet been reached.

(1) The opinion that the prophecy belongs to a time not long after the destruction of Samaria has much to recommend it. The overthrow of the greater portion of Jehovah's people must have excited the greatest consternation in Judah, and led to anxious questionings as to where this seemingly irresistible tide of invasion was to end. This would be a suitable occasion for the publication of a prophetic oracle on the true function of Assyria in Jehovah's counsel and the impassable limit to its power. It is also in favour of an early date that *v.* 20 seems to contain a reflection on the fatal policy inaugurated by Ahaz of trusting to Assyria as the best security against national annihilation. The principal objection to this view arises from the impression, which is probably a just one, that the prophet regards the crisis, and consequently the defeat of Assyria, as *imminent* (see esp. *vv.* 28—34).

(2) Assuming that an invasion of Judah was either actually carried out or at least seriously contemplated by Sargon about 711, several critics have brought this prophecy into connexion with that event. The same difficulty, however, meets us here in another form. The prophecy of chapter xx., which undoubtedly belongs to the time supposed, anticipates a still further extension of the Assyrian conquests to Egypt and Ethiopia. It seems incredible that when Isaiah had for three years sought to impress that fact on his countrymen, he should simultaneously announce the downfall of Assyria as an event just about to take place.

(3) There remains the hypothesis that this oracle belongs generally to the same period as the group of discourses with which it has the closest affinities (*chs.* xxviii.—xxxii.), and was uttered in view of Sennacherib's invasion in 701. Only, the imaginary description of the invader's route in *vv.* 28—32 forbids us to place it too near the actual attack. The Assyrians are there conceived as advancing *from the north*, which was the natural course for an Assyrian onslaught on Jerusalem to take. Sennacherib's expedition, however, came from the Philistine plain, and for some time previous to the event, it must have been evident that that was the direction from which danger was to be apprehended. Other objections to this date have little weight. It is true that none of the conquests enumerated in *v.* 9 were effected by Sennacherib in person, but neither were they all effected by any one king, and if it is the king who speaks in *v.* 9 he speaks not in his own name but as the representative of the might of Asshur. Nor is *v.* 27 inconsistent with the fact that Hezekiah had renounced his allegiance to Assyria before the attack by Sennacherib. The mere withholding of tribute was by no means equivalent to emancipation from the Assyrian yoke, so long as Assyria was in a position to enforce submission by an exemplary chastisement.

These arguments are only valid on the assumption of the Isaianic authorship and substantial unity of the passage as a whole. The grounds on which this has been disputed by recent writers (see Cheyne,

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger,
And the staff in their hand *is* mine indignation.
I will send him against a hypocritical nation,

5

6

Introduction, pp. xlviii ff.) are not convincing, and cannot be adequately discussed here.

Following Ewald, we may divide the prophecy into three main sections:—

i. vv. 5—15. The plan of Jehovah and the plan of Asshur.

(1) The divine mission entrusted to Assyria is boldly contrasted with the barbarous lust of plunder and conquest, and the glorification of brute force which characterised the policy of that Empire (5—7).

(2) The latter thought is expanded in a speech put into the mouth of the Assyrian, in which he enumerates his past successes, and confidently anticipates an easy conquest of Jerusalem (8—11). The prophet's answer (12).

(3) A second speech of the Assyrian, full of the spirit of self-exaltation and savage delight in the exercise of irresistible power (13, 14); the section closing with a contemptuous reply on the part of the prophet, recalling the image of the opening verse (15).

ii. vv. 16—23. The overthrow of Assyria and its consequences for Judah.

(1) The destruction of Assyria is described under the two figures of a wasting disease and a consuming fire (16—19).

(2) The conversion of the Remnant of Israel will follow this decisive manifestation of Jehovah's sovereignty (20—23).

iii. vv. 24—34. The peroration, consisting of:

(1) A message of comfort to the harassed nation (24—27).

(2) An ideal description of the march of the Assyrian from the northern frontier to the walls of Jerusalem (28—32) and his sudden annihilation by the hand of Jehovah (33, 34).

5—7. Jehovah's plan contrasted with Assyria's purpose.

5. *O Assyrian*] *Ho Asshur*, the name both of the people and its national god. The god being little more than the personified genius of the nation, we might almost venture to suppose that he is here directly addressed and is the speaker in vv. 8 ff. But the word is never used of the god in the O.T.

the rod of mine anger] the instrument with which Jehovah chastises the nations, cf. Jer. li. 20.

and the staff...indignation] lit. "and a staff, it is in their hand, my indignation,"—an absolutely refractory clause. Driver (*Tenses* § 201, 1, Obs.) translates "and a staff is it in their hand, [viz.] mine indignation." But to say in one line that Assyria is the rod of Jehovah's anger and in the next that His indignation is a staff in *their* hand is awkward in the extreme. Better a "flat tautology" than that, although the objection is meaningless as applied to a synonymous parallelism. It is best to omit the words "it is in their hand" as a gloss and render *and the staff of mine indignation*.

6. *I will send him, &c.*] Rather: I send him against a profane

- And against the people of my wrath will I give him
a charge,
To take the spoil, and to take the prey,
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7. Howbeit he meaneth not so,
Neither doth his heart think so;
But *it is* in his heart to destroy
And cut off nations not a few.
8. For he saith, *Are* not my princes altogether kings?
9. *Is* not Calno as Carchemish?
Is not Hamath as Arpad?
Is not Samaria as Damascus?
10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols,

nation (R.V.). See ch. ix. 17. In a general description of the mission of Assyria it is not advisable to limit the reference to Judah or Israel. The meaning is that Jehovah sends the Assyrian against any nation that deserves punishment.

people of my wrath] See ix. 19.

like the mire of the streets] Cf. Ps. xviii. 42; Mic. vii. 10.

7. *Howbeit he meaneth not so*] The charge is not so much that Asshur exceeds his commission (as in Zech. i. 15), as that he recognises no commission at all; his policy is entirely oblivious of moral interests.

8—11. The first speech of the Assyrian.

8. *Are not my officers altogether kings?*] Many of them really were subjugated kings (2 Ki. xxv. 28), and any one of them excelled in dignity the petty sovereigns of the independent states (see ch. xxxvi. 9). The title "King of Kings" (Ez. xxvi. 7) was already assumed by Assyrian monarchs.

9. The six cities are enumerated in geographical order from north to south, the first of each pair being, however, nearer to Jerusalem than the second. (1) The site of Carchemish (Ass. *Gargamîsh*) was identified by Mr G. Smith with the ruins of *Jerabts* on the right bank of the Euphrates. As a great centre of the Hittite confederacy it had been frequently subdued by Assyrian kings, and was ultimately incorporated in the Empire by Sargon in 717. (2) Calno is probably *Kullani*, a city near Arpad, captured by Tiglath-pileser III. about 738. It is probably identical with the Calneh mentioned in Am. vi. 2; but quite distinct from the Babylonian Calnēh of Gen. x. 10. (3) Arpad (now *Tell Erfād*, about 15 miles north of Aleppo) was taken about 740 by Tiglath-pileser. (4) Hamath (*Hamah*, on the Orontes, about half way between Carchemish and Damascus) was taken by Tiglath-pileser in 738 and again by Sargon in 720. (5) Damascus fell about 732 and (6) Samaria in 722.

10. *the kingdoms of the idols*] The expression "nonentities" (see on ch. ii. 8) is surprising in the mouth of the Assyrian; but not inappropriate, since even from his point of view the overthrow of so many

And whose graven images did excel *them of Jerusalem and of Samaria* ;
 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her ¹¹ idols,
 So do to Jerusalem and her idols?
 Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord ¹² hath performed his whole work
 Upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem,
 I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria,
 And the glory of his high looks.
 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have ¹³ done *it*,
 And by my wisdom ; for I am prudent :
 And I have removed the bounds of the people,

kingdoms might seem a demonstration of the non-entity of their gods as compared with the solitary might of Asshur.

and whose graven images, &c.] A circumstantial clause: **although their images, &c.**

did excel] "were more than," either in number or importance. The Assyrian is after all an idolater at heart, measuring the prestige of a god by the multitude and excellence of his graven images.

11. But Samaria has fallen, her idols have not saved her ; how then can Jerusalem escape, who trusts in the same deity? *Samaria and her idols (nonentities)...Jerusalem and her idols (images).*

12. The verse seems to interrupt what might well have been a single speech of the Assyrian King, by a threat of the doom reserved for him. The arrogant assumption that Jehovah is a mere tribal deity, who is defeated when His images are overthrown, rouses the prophet to this indignant outburst.

when the Lord hath performed] **completed**, lit. "cut off." The figure is taken from the cutting off of the finished web from the loom. See ch. xxxviii. 12; also Zech. iv. 9.

his whole work] The work of chastisement and purification, to be executed *on mount Zion and on Jerusalem*.

the fruit of the stout heart (lit. "fruit of the pride of heart," see ch. ix. 9) *of the king of Assyria*] The "fruit" is the outcome of his pride in such language as vv. 8—11, 13 f.

13, 14. The second imaginary speech of the king of Assyria. He ascribes his successes (and how easy have they been! v. 14) solely to his own power and wisdom. Comp. the self-glorification of the prince of Tyre in Ezek. xxviii.

13. *I am prudent*] Better, **I have insight**.

I have removed the bounds of the people] (**peoples** as R.V.). It was the policy of the later Assyrian Empire to obliterate national distinctions,

- And have robbed their treasures,
 And I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*:
 14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the
 people:
 And as *one* gathereth eggs *that are* left,
 Have I gathered all the earth;
 And there was none that moved the wing,
 Or opened the mouth, or peeped.
- 15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth
 therewith?
 Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that
 shaketh it?
 As if the rod should shake *itself* against them that lift
 it up,
 Or as if the staff should lift up *itself*, as if it were no
 wood.

partly by welding the separate states under a single administration and partly by wholesale deportation of conquered populations. In the view of antiquity this was a violation of the divinely constituted order of the world (see Deut. xxxii. 8). Even in the Messianic age, Isaiah anticipates that the political integrity of different nationalities will be preserved (ch. ii. 2—4).

their treasures] lit. *parata*, "things prepared."

put down the inhabitants] R.V. has brought down...them that sit (on thrones). Vulg. "in sublimi residentes." That translation is suggested by the verb "bring down," which seems to imply that those referred to were previously exalted. The text is possibly defective. LXX. reads *σείσω πῶλεις κατοικουμένας*.

like a valiant man] The Qērê (*kabbîr*, a word found only in Isaiah and Job) means "a great one" (Job xxxiv. 17 [R.V.], 24, xxxvi. 5, of God). It is difficult to see why in this case the consonantal text was departed from. It has *kê'abbîr*, either "like a strong one" (*Kaph veritatis*), or "like a bull." See on ch. i. 24. The bull as a symbol of strength figures largely in Assyrian art.

14. The magnificent simile represents the ease with which the Assyrians had rifled the countries of their treasures, and the panic terror which their approach everywhere produced.

or peeped] R.V. *chirped*; the same word as in viii. 19.

15. To a believer in the divine government of the world the self-exaltation of Assyria is as ludicrous as if a tool were to vaunt itself against the man who uses it. The two last clauses are exclamations.

against them that lift it up] A plural of majesty, indicating that Jehovah is meant. Some Hebrew MSS., however, have the singular.

should lift up itself, as if it were no wood] Lit. *should lift up not-*

Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, 16
 Send among his fat ones leanness;
 And under his glory he shall kindle a burning
 Like the burning of a fire.
 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, 17
 And his Holy One for a flame:
 And it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers
 in one day;
 And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his 18
 fruitful field,
 Both soul and body:
 And they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.
 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, 19
 That a child may write them.

And it shall come to pass in that day, 20
That the remnant of Israel,
 And such as are escaped of the house of Jacob,

wood. (See R.V.) "Not-wood" is a compound noun like "not-man" in ch. xxxi. 8; "one who is not wood" i.e. a man.

16—19. The destruction of the Assyrian army is described under the two figures of sickness and a conflagration. There is a certain amount of confusion in the metaphors, and undoubtedly the style deteriorates at this point.

16. *the Lord, the Lord of hosts*] as in ch. i. 24. The ordinary printed editions have the unparalleled expression *Adônāi Tsēbāôth*, for which Baer rightly restores *Yahveh Tsēbāôth*.

send among his fat ones] Better, "send into his fat limbs," the image being that of a human body. For the metaphor see ch. xvii. 4.

he shall kindle...fire] Better, *there shall burn a burning like the burning of fire*. The monotony is as marked in the Hebrew as in this translation.

17. The same figure as in ch. ix. 18.

18. *both soul and body*] For similarly abrupt changes of metaphor, cf. ch. v. 24, viii. 8, xxviii. 18.

and they shall be...fainteth] Render with R.V. marg., *and it shall be as when a sick man pineth away*, a return to the figure with which v. 16 opens. The participle *nôšēs* occurs nowhere else: A.V. connects it with *nēs* a standard; the translation "sick man" rests on the analogy of the Syriac.

19. *And the rest*] *the remnant* (R.V.); the same word as in vv. 20, 21, 22. *shall be few*] lit. "a number," a numerable quantity.

a child may write them] i.e. make a list of them.

20—23. The conversion of the survivors of Israel.

20. *such as are escaped*] cf. ch. iv. 2.

Shall no more again stay upon him that smote them;
But shall stay upon the LORD,
The Holy One of Israel, in truth.

21 The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob,
Unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of
the sea,
Yet a remnant of them shall return:
The consumption decreed shall overflow *with*
righteousness.

23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a con-
sumption, even determined,
In the midst of all *the* land.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts,

shall no more again stay (themselves) *upon him that smote them*] an allusion to the Assyrian alliance contracted by Ahaz (2 Ki. xvi. 7 ff.), a policy, however, whose evil consequences were not fully realised till the reign of Hezekiah. From the false situation in which the nation was then placed no escape was possible except by the intervention of Jehovah. After that deliverance the survivors shall adopt the attitude, consistently advocated by Isaiah, of steadfast reliance on Jehovah alone; *they shall stay* (themselves) *upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth* (in faithfulness).

21. *The remnant, &c.*] **A remnant shall turn.** Thus shall be fulfilled the prophecy embodied in the name of Isaiah's son, *Shear-jashub* (ch. vii. 3). *the mighty God*] **the Hero-God**—in ch. ix. 6 a title of the Messiah, but here apparently of Jehovah.

22. "For though thy population, O Israel, should be as the sand of the sea, (only) a remnant in it shall turn (and be saved)." (Cf. Hos. i. 10; Gen. xxii. 17.)

the consumption decreed...righteousness] Render: **extermination is decreed overflowing in righteousness.** The "extermination" is the judgment which reduces the teeming population of Israel to a mere remnant; this will be an overwhelming manifestation of Jehovah's judicial righteousness (see on ch. i. 27). It seems impossible to take this clause in a consolatory sense, as if the verb "decreed" expressed the limitation fixed for the judgment. The very similar phraseology of the next verse, compared with ch. xxviii. 22, shews that the threatening aspect of the decree is prominent.

23. The verse reads: **For an extermination and a decisive work is the Lord Jehovah of Hosts about to execute in the midst of the whole earth** (or land): cf. ch. xxviii. 22. The phrase "extermination and decisive work" is repeated in Dan. ix. 27 (cf. xi. 36). The word for "decisive" is from the verb rendered "decreed" in last verse.

O my people that dwellest in Zion,
 Be not afraid of the Assyrian :
 He shall smite thee with a rod,
 And shall lift up his staff against thee, after the
 manner of Egypt.
 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall ²⁵
 cease,
 And mine anger in their destruction.
 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for ²⁶
 him
 According to the slaughter of Midian at the rock Oreb:
 And *as* his rod *was* upon the sea,
 So shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.
 And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That his burden shall be taken away from off thy ²⁷
 shoulder,
 And his yoke from off thy neck,

24—27. In view of this ultimate prospect, the prophet turns with a message of consolation to the believing kernel of the nation.

24. *O my people that dwellest in Zion*] Cf. ch. xiv. 32, xxx. 19. Dwelling in Zion is the emblem of security, since it is there that Jehovah will beat back and destroy the Assyrian (vv. 32—34).

he shall smite thee...and shall lift up...] These are relative clauses attached to "the Assyrian." Render: **who smites thee...and lifts up his staff, &c.** (cf. ix. 4).

after the manner of Egypt] As the Egyptians did in the time of the Oppression, Exod. v. (cf. for the expressions Am. iv. 10).

25. *For yet a very little while*] Cf. ch. xxix. 17, (xvi. 14).

and mine anger in their destruction] A more grammatical rendering would be: **and mine anger (is directed) to their** (the Assyrians') **annihilation.** The two clauses of the verse appear to be antithetical; indignation (against Israel) comes to an end, wrath (against Assyria) culminates in its utter destruction.

26. For *stir up for him* render **brandish over him**, a sense authenticated by 2 Sam. xxiii. 18.

according to the slaughter...Oreb] Transl. **like the smiting of Midian at the rock Oreb.** For the incident referred to, see Jud. vii. 25 (cf. Ps. lxxxiii. 9, 11; Is. ix. 4).

and as his rod...Egypt] To be paraphrased thus: "and his rod (which was stretched out) over the (Red) Sea (at the Exodus from Egypt), he shall lift up as it was lifted up to destroy the Egyptians." The last phrase is used in effective antithesis to the use in v. 24.

27. The figures of the burden and the yoke are combined exactly as in ch. xiv. 25.

And the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

and the yoke...anointing] A very difficult sentence. The closest rendering is that of the margin of R.V.: **and the yoke shall be destroyed by reason of fatness.** This has usually been interpreted to mean that the animal (Judah) will "wax fat and kick" (Deut. xxxii. 15) and break its yoke; or that its increasing fatness will burst the yoke on its neck (a very odd comparison!). Neither of these senses is at all tolerable; according to Isaiah's teaching the prosperity of the nation only commences after Jehovah has destroyed the Assyrian yoke. Dillmann's interpretation—Judah will become so vigorous after its emancipation that no one will ever think of putting it under the yoke again—is equally unsatisfying. The text is almost certainly corrupt, and of the various emendations that have been proposed the most plausible are those which find in the clause a mutilated introduction to vv. 28—32. Prof. Robertson Smith has suggested instead of the last four words: **יְהוָה: עֲלֵה מִצְפֹּן שָׂדֶה**. The twenty-seventh verse would end with the first word ("the yoke *shall cease* from off thy neck"), and the next would begin thus: "A destroyer comes up from the north; he comes to Aiath, &c." The alterations are considerable, but undoubtedly we thus obtain a suitable commencement to the sketch of the Assyrian advance. Duhm follows on the same lines, but reads, "he comes up from Pene-Rimmon" (i.e. the Rock Rimmon, a few miles north of Aiath, Jud. xx. 45). This however plunges us *in medias res* as abruptly as before.

28—32. A free delineation (mostly in prophetic perfects) of the march of an Assyrian army towards Jerusalem. The verses are not to be taken as a prediction that the enemy will actually come by this route, still less of course are they an *oraculum post eventum*. They simply present a graphic picture of the unrelenting energy and eagerness of an Assyrian army, and the ease with which it might invade Judah from the north now that Samaria has fallen. And this is done in order to introduce the assurance that when the invader does come, and the prize is just within his grasp, Jehovah will smite him down (vv. 33 ff.). A passage of very similar character is Mic. i. 10—16.

The strategic point in the itinerary here sketched is the Pass of Michmash, the scene of Jonathan's famous exploit against the Philistines (1 Sam. xiv.), and at this time probably marking the northern frontier of the kingdom of Judah. It is situated in the modern Wadi Suweinîf, and is guarded by the villages of Michmash on the north and Geba on the south. The road from Michmash crosses the valley in a south-westerly direction, and about midway between Michmash and Geba (the whole distance is about two miles) traverses an extremely narrow defile, where a large army might easily be checked by a handful of resolute defenders. In vv. 28 f. Isaiah alludes to the precautions that would naturally be taken to secure a safe passage of this difficult ravine.

He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; 28
 At Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:
 They are gone over the passage: they have taken up 29
 their lodging at Geba;
 Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.
 Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: 30
 Cause *it* to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth.
 Madmenah is removed; 31
 The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.
 As yet shall *he* remain at Nob *that* day: 32
 He shall shake his hand *against* the mount of the
 daughter of Zion,
 The hill of Jerusalem.

28. He comes upon Aiath] *'Ayyath* (cf. 1 Chr. vii. 28 [R.V. marg.]; Neh. xi. 31) is no doubt the ancient *'Ai*, and was probably two miles N.W. from Michmash.

Migron] The only known place of this name lay on the south side of the pass (1 Sam. xiv. 2). Prof. Robertson Smith thinks the operation indicated is the seizing of this post on the southern side by a *coup de main* before attempting to lead the main army through the defile. Most other commentators, however, hold that some place, not to be certainly identified, between Ai and Michmash is intended.

laid up his carriages] R.V. *layeth up his baggage*, deposits his *impedimenta*. "Carriages" in old English means of course not that in which one is carried, but that which one carries (cf. Acts xxi. 15).

29. They go through the pass; they make Geba their encampment for the night. The latter clause might also be translated as the eager cry of the Assyrians: "Geba is our night quarters." From this point the road to Jerusalem lies open; hence the remaining verses simply describe the terror spread amongst the villages along the route of the Assyrians. *Ramah* (*Er-Râm*) is less than two miles due west of Geba, *Gibeah of Saul* is probably *Tulêl el-Fâl*, about halfway between that place and Jerusalem.

30. Shriek loudly, O daughter of Gallim; listen, O Laishah. Neither of these places can be identified.

O poor Anathoth] Translate, with a slight change of pointing, *answer her, O Anathoth*. Anathoth (*'Anâta*) is about three miles N.N.E. from Jerusalem.

31. *Madmenah* (Dung-hill) and *Gebim* (Cisterns) are both unknown. For *gather themselves to flee* render: *hastily secure* (their belongings), Ex. ix. 19.

32. Render with Cheyne: *This very day he will halt in Nob, swinging his hand*, &c. Nob (1 Sam. xxi. xxii.; Neh. xi. 32) must be sought in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, but its site has not yet been ascertained. The most probable conjecture is that it was on the height of Scopus overlooking the city from the north.

- 33 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
 Shall lop the bough with terror:
 And the high ones of stature *shall be* hewn down,
 And the haughty shall be humbled.
- 34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with
 iron,
 And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

33, 34. Just when the Assyrian is in sight of his goal, Jehovah smites him down. The description naturally passes into figurative and somewhat vague language. The image is that of a stately forest laid low by the axe-man.

33. **The Lord Jehovah of Hosts**, as in v. 16.

The "high ones of stature," and the "lofty ones" (R.V.) are the great trees; the epithets keep within the limits of the figure. For *be humbled* read *lie low*.

34. *the thickets of the forest* (R.V.) cf. ch. ix. 18. The verb in the first clause is probably passive: "shall be cut down." *Lebanon*] Better, **the Lebanon**. Lebanon means "the white (mountain)"—either from its snows or its chalk cliffs—and in Hebr. prose always retains the art.; here, however, the reference is to its forests, which supply a figure for the Assyrian army.

a mighty one] or "a majestic One"—Jehovah Himself.

CHAP. XI.

The overthrow of the world-power is followed by the establishment of the Messiah's Kingdom. In this chapter, however, we have two Messianic pictures so distinct in character that it is necessary to consider them separately.

(i) vv. 1—9 contain a prophecy of the advent of the Messiah (v. 1), a description of his character (2) and government (3—5) and a picture of the marvellous transformation of animated nature which is the reflection of his just and beneficent reign (6—9). The passage stands along with ch. ix. 1—7 and xxxii. 1 ff. as one of the three great presentations of the conception of a personal Messiah which the book of Isaiah contains. Until quite recently the Isaianic authorship of all three passages was accepted without hesitation by critics of all shades of opinion. Hackmann and Cheyne now dissent from this view, and relegate the whole conception of a personal Messiah to a period subsequent to the Exile. But their objections are hardly of sufficient weight to justify so revolutionary a conclusion. The linguistic arguments are admitted by Cheyne to be indecisive. And while it is true that the contents of the prophecy do not point unambiguously to the age of Isaiah, this is not to be wondered at in a delineation of the ideal future. On the other hand the passage contains no assumptions inconsistent with Isaiah's authorship. For the decay of the Davidic dynasty, which appears to be implied in the figure of v. 1, is not a presupposition in the

sense that the prophecy could not have been written until it was an accomplished fact. It is assumed only that the reigning dynasty will have disappeared before the manifestation of the Messiah; and this expectation is in harmony with Isaiah's whole conception of the progress of events. It is no more than is involved in the sentence of rejection on Ahaz (ch. vii. 13 ff.), or perhaps in the anticipation of an overwhelming national calamity, which the prophet maintained to the end of his ministry. In any case the Messianic age is a new creation, and if there was to be an ideal Son of David at all, he must be conceived as a new shoot from the ancient stock of Jesse.

(ii) *vv. 10—16*, on the other hand, describe mainly the *formation* of the new Messianic community by the home-gathering of Israelites from all parts of the world. The arguments against the genuineness of this passage are more cogent than in the case of (i), and are endorsed by a wider circle of critics. Here a definite historical situation is assumed which can only with some violence be harmonised with the actual circumstances of Isaiah's time. Jews are in exile not only in Assyria, but in Egypt, Ethiopia, the Mediterranean lands, &c. Further, these Exiles are described as a "Remnant," a term which seems to imply that some have been already restored, and which at all events is never used by Isaiah of those who have gone into captivity, but of those who survive the judgment in the land of Israel. It is no doubt possible, as Delitzsch and Bredenkamp believe, that Isaiah might have been transported into the future, and dealt with a state of things which was not to arise till long afterwards. But it is more in accordance with the analogy of prophecy to suppose that the outlook was conceived in the circumstances which it presupposes, especially since the undoubted writings of Isaiah never mention a return from Exile, or a restoration of the Northern Tribes, or a subjugation of the neighbouring states by warlike conquest. These facts, and some others which will be referred to in the Notes, although not conclusive, justify a certain measure of hesitation in assigning the prophecy to Isaiah; and this uncertainty should be borne in mind in putting together the various elements which entered into his vision of the future of God's kingdom.

CH. XI. 1—9. THE MESSIAH AND HIS KINGDOM.

It is interesting to compare this passage with ch. ix. 1—7. There the delineation of the Messianic age starts from its broadest and most general features—the light breaking on the land, the universally diffused joy of the redeemed nation—and only at the end centres itself in the person of the Wonderful Child who is born to ascend the throne. Here the person of the Messiah comes first, and then the healing and regenerating influences of which he is the channel. To what period of Isaiah's career the prophecy belongs cannot be determined. The affinity with ch. ix. 1—7 suggests the reign of Ahaz, to which it is assigned by Guthe in accordance with a particular theory of the development of Isaiah's eschatology. But since there is no evidence that the idea of the Messianic King ever lost its significance to the prophet's mind, it might with equal propriety be referred to any subsequent period of his ministry.

- 11 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,
 And a Branch shall grow out of his roots:
 2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
 The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 The spirit of counsel and might,
 The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Duhm places this and the companion oracles of ii. 2—4, xxxii. 1—5 in the evening of Isaiah's long life. In its present setting the passage is no doubt intended as a sequel to ch. x. 5—34 and it might even belong to the same date.

1. The advent of the Messiah. Idea and figure correspond to those of ch. vi. 13; as a new Israel will spring up from the "stump" of the old, so the Messianic King will arise from the decayed family of David. Some commentators find in the image an intentional contrast to that of ch. x. 34; while the forest of Assyria is cut down never to spring up again, the stock of Judah's royal dynasty will sprout and flourish. The precise relation of the Messiah to the reigning branch of the family is purposely left indefinite (cf. Mic. v. 2).

a rod] Better as R.V. *a shoot*. The word rendered "*stem*" occurs only twice again. Here it bears the same meaning as in Job xiv. 8; it is the *stock* which remains in the earth after the tree is cut down. In Is. xl. 24 it means a "slip" planted in the ground in order to strike root. The figure, therefore, like "*roots*" in the next line, seems to imply the downfall of the dynasty.

a Branch shall grow out of his roots] Render as R.V. *a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit*—shall come to maturity. Jesse is mentioned instead of David probably because of the intentional vagueness in which the Messiah's origin is left.

2. His supernatural endowment through the spirit of Jehovah with the qualities of a perfect ruler. The "charismata" are grouped in three pairs; when we add the separate mention of the spirit of Jehovah at the head of the list we may perhaps find here the first suggestion of the "seven spirits" of God (Rev. i. 4). In reality, however, the three pairs unfold the different aspects of the "Spirit of Jehovah." The first pair of virtues are intellectual, the second practical, and the third religious.

wisdom and understanding (or "discernment") are the fundamental intellectual qualifications of a judge or ruler. Deut. i. 13; 1 Ki. iii. 12.

counsel and might] "Counsel" is the faculty of adapting means to ends or of forming right resolutions; "might" the energy necessary to carry them through.

of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD] *of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah*. It seems necessary here to take "knowledge" as equivalent to "knowledge of Jehovah," in spite of the rule that "not more than one construct can stand before the same genitive" (Davidson, *Syntax*, § 27. b). "Knowledge of Jehovah" is insight into His cha-

And shall make him of quick understanding in the ³
fear of the LORD:

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,
Neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, ⁴

And reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:

And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his
mouth,

racter and His moral claims on men, "fear of Jehovah" is the common O.T. expression for piety; both together make up the O.T. idea of religion.

3—5. Thus equipped with all the personal qualities needful for his high office, the ideal King will exercise a perfectly just and equitable government over his subjects. The Hebrew conception of kingship includes two functions, leadership in war and the administration of justice in time of peace (1 Sam. viii. 20). Here, for an obvious reason (ch. ix. 5), only the civil aspect of the office is dwelt upon.

3. *and shall make him...LORD*] The best translation is that of R.V. **and his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah**, lit. "his scent shall be in, &c." The Messiah shall not only possess true religion himself, but shall be quick to recognise its presence in others and shall take delight in it wherever he finds it. The sense is perhaps appropriate, but the expression is very peculiar, and hence some critics consider that the clause is a corrupt repetition of the preceding words. (See Cheyne's *Commentary*, crit. note.)

he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, &c.] i.e. in virtue of the spirit with which he is endowed, he shall not be dependent on the evidence of his senses, but shall immediately and infallibly discern the moral condition of men's hearts (cf. 2 Sam. xiv. 20). The second member of the parallelism shews that more than mere impartiality in judgment is intended. For *reprove* render **decide**, as R.V. marg.

4. The special objects of his care are the defenceless and down-trodden classes (cf. ch. i. 23, x. 2). Observe that the sporadic outbreak of injustice and violence does not appear to be excluded from Isaiah's conception of the Messianic age; only, the transgressors are at once discovered and destroyed.

the meek of the earth] Possibly "the oppressed in the land." Two words (*ʾānî* and *ʾānāv*) are often confounded in the Hebr. Text; the former means simply to be in abject circumstances, the latter includes the religious virtue of resignation to an adverse lot (Rahlf's, *ʾAnî und ʾAnaw in den Psalmen*).

he shall smite the earth] The word for "earth" (*ʾereṣ*) is probably written wrongly for *ʾārîṣ* "oppressor." It is not permissible, with Del. &c., to explain "earth" in the N.T. sense of "the (ungodly) world," or "Wicked," in the next clause, of the Antichrist (cf. 2 Thess. ii. 8).

with the rod of his mouth...with the breath of his lips] Cf. Rev. i. 6. The Messiah's sentence has a self-fulfilling energy (cf. Hos. vi. 5;

And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

- 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling
together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 And the cow and the bear shall feed;
Their young ones shall lie down together:
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the
asp,

Acts v. 1—10). This reveals the operation of the "spirit of might," as v. 3 represents the effect of the "spirit of wisdom."

5. "Righteousness" and "faithfulness" are the strength of the Messiah's government (ch. ix. 7). The girdle is the symbol of resolute and vigorous action. Comp. the "girdle of truth" in Eph. vi. 14.

6—8. This remarkable prophecy of the idyllic state of the brute creation is imitated in the Sibylline Oracles (iii. 766 ff.) and more faintly echoed in the Fourth and Fifth Eclogues of Vergil. Similarly, an Arabic poet (*Ibn Onain*, quoted by Ges.) speaks of "a righteousness, through which the hungry wolf becomes tame."—The description is not to be interpreted allegorically, as if the wild beasts were merely symbols for cruel and rapacious men. Neither perhaps is it to be taken quite literally. It is rather a poetic presentation of the truth that the regeneration of human society is to be accompanied by a restoration of the harmony of creation (cf. Rom. viii. 19—22). The fact that tame and wild animals are regularly bracketed together shews that the main idea is the establishment of peace between man and the animals (Hos. ii. 20); the animals that are now wild shall no longer prey on those that are domesticated for the service of man. But the striking feature of the prophecy is that the predatory beasts are not conceived as extirpated (as Ezek. xxxiv. 25, 28) but as having their habits and instincts changed.

7. Cf. lxv. 25. *shall feed*] Better, *shall graze*, unless we are to supply "alike" as in lxv. 25. Some critics prefer to read "shall associate together," with a small alteration of the text.

8. The most startling contrast of all,—the innocent babe playing with the deadly serpent.

asp] Heb. *pethen*, rendered "adder" in Ps. lviii. 4, xci. 13, elsewhere as here. The species has not been identified. The *cockatrice* (*giph'on*), rendered "adder" in Prov. xxxiii. 32) is usually identified with the basilisk (or King-serpent) of North Africa, but that reptile is not found in Palestine.

And the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD,

As the waters cover the sea.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, 10

Which shall stand for an ensign of the people;

To it shall the Gentiles seek:

And his rest shall be glorious.

The word *den* (only here) is doubtful. The most natural view is that it is fem. of the word for "luminary" and denotes the glittering eye of the serpent, which attracts the child like a jewel.

The verb rendered *put* means strictly "lead"; comp. *ducere manum*.

9. It is questionable if the subject here is still the wild beasts (as in lxx. 25). The second half of the verse is rather against this, and it is better to translate the first half: **none shall do evil or act corruptly in all, &c.**

my holy mountain] Most naturally "Zion," but some commentators understand it of the whole hill-country of Palestine.

for the earth shall be full...sea] Cf. Hab. ii. 14. On the peculiar participial construction, see Driver, *Tenses* § 135. (7) Obs.

CH. XI. (10) 11—16. A PROPHECY OF THE RETURN FROM EXILE.

10. This verse occupies a position somewhat detached from those that follow, as is shewn by the repetition of the introductory formula in v. 11. The thought also is distinct and complete. It is a prophecy of the attractive influence of the true religion over the nations of the world; and resembles ch. ii. 2—4, although here the personal Messiah is the central figure. Comp. John xii. 32.

The construction of the sentence involves a *casus pendens* (Driver, *Tenses*, pp. 264 ff.). Render thus: **and it shall come to pass in that day, the root of Jesse who shall stand as a signal to the peoples—to him shall, &c.**

a root of Jesse] i.e. the "branch from the roots," of v. 1. The expression seems to have become a technical title of the Messiah (cf. ch. liii. 2; Eccclus. xlvii. 22; Rev. v. 5, xxii. 16). The variation of the figure from v. 1 rather tells against the Isaianic authorship of this passage.

an ensign] as rallying-point, see on ch. v. 26.

to it shall the Gentiles seek] Rather, **of him shall nations enquire**—a phrase used of the consulting of an oracle (ch. viii. 19, xix. 3). The Messiah is to be the great religious Teacher and Authority of the world.

his rest shall be glorious] **his resting-place** (Gen. xlix. 15,—here alone used of a royal residence) **shall be glory**, cf. ch. iv. 5.

- 11 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the Lord shall set his hand again the second
 time
 To recover the remnant of his people,
 Which shall be left from Assyria,
 And from Egypt, and from Pathros,
 And from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar,
 And from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.
- 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations,
 And shall assemble the outcasts of Israel,
 And gather together the dispersed of Judah

11, 12. The gathering of the "dispersed of Israel." It is of course impossible to disprove that in Isaiah's time scattered Israelites were to be found in all the countries mentioned at the end of v. 11. Some might have been included among the captives whom Sargon settled in Elam, Babylonia and Hamath; fugitives from the Northern Kingdom might have taken refuge in considerable numbers in Egypt at the fall of Samaria; and the slave-trade might have carried small groups of Hebrews to the remoter regions. But the language here seems to imply a Jewish dispersion on a large scale, and the only wholesale deportations that had taken place in Isaiah's time were those of Northern Israelites to the Assyrian Empire (2 Ki. xv. 29, xvii. 6). On the other hand, the references exactly fit the circumstances of the post-exilic period, when large colonies of Jews are known to have been spread over the lands here enumerated.

11. *the Lord shall set his hand again*] Or, **the Lord shall again (lift up) his hand.** The verb has to be supplied from the context.

the second time] If the standpoint (actual or ideal) of the prophecy be post-exilic, the most probable reference would be to the first return from exile under Cyrus. Otherwise, we must understand "the first time" of the exodus from Egypt, which is hardly natural, although the prophecy does abound in allusions to that great deliverance.

the remnant] An Isaianic word, but used in a non-Isaianic sense. See introductory note to this chapter. For *recover* read **purchase**, or "redeem."

Pathros (Upper Egypt, Gen. x. 14) and *Cush* (Ethiopia) are dependencies of Egypt; *Elam* (Susiana), *Shinar* (Babylonia) and *Hamath* (see on ch. x. 9) of Assyria. It should be noticed that the use of the name "Assyria" for the supreme power in Western Asia occurs in post-exilic writings (Ezra vi. 22).

the islands of the sea] The **coast-lands** or countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

12. The meaning of the "signal" here is explained by ch. xlix. 22; it is a signal to the *nations* to release or even to bring back the *exiles*.

the dispersed of Judah] The participle in Hebr. is fem. This may be "a short way of expressing that both sexes will be included"

From the four corners of the earth.

The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,

And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off:

Ephraim shall not envy Judah,

And Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines ¹⁴
toward the west;

They shall spoil them of the east together:

They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab;

And the children of Ammon shall obey them.

And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the ¹⁵
Egyptian sea;

(Cheyne). Giesebrecht, however, explains it by the favourite emblem (with later writers) of a scattered flock (Ez. xxxiv. 4 ff.; Zeph. iii. 19).

the four corners (lit. "edges," Deut. xxii. 12) *of the earth*] The expression occurs only in Ez. vii. 2 (of the land); Job xxxvii. 3, xxxviii. 13 (cf. Is. xxiv. 16).

13, 14. The healing of the breach between the Northern and Southern kingdoms, and their joint conquest of the neighbouring peoples.

13. The parallelism seems to demand that the *adversaries of Judah* be explained as gen. of the subject (those in Judah that are adversaries to Ephraim). This is not very natural, but it is certainly better than to take *envy of Ephraim* as gen. of obj. (envy felt by Judah towards Ephraim).

shall not vex] **shall not oppress**. It is the verb of which "adversaries" is the participle. The ascription of "oppression" to Judah and "envy" to Ephraim is hardly consistent with the relative importance of the two states previous to 722. At the same time there seems to be here a clear allusion to ch. ix. 9—12, 20.

14. *they shall fly*] or **swoop**, as a bird of prey (Hab. i. 8). The country of the Philistines is compared to a *shoulder* falling down towards the sea (cf. Num. xxxiv. 11; Jos. xv. 11, xviii. 12).

them of the east] lit. **the children of the East** (as R.V.), a name for the Arabs of the Eastern desert.

they shall lay...obey them] The Hebrew construction is peculiar. Lit. "Edom and Moab shall be the forth-putting of their hand, and the children of Ammon their obedience."

15, 16. A miraculous passage prepared for the return of the exiles. The allusions to the Exodus are palpable and extend to the next chapter.

15. Cf. Zech. x. 10 f. *shall utterly destroy*] lit. "lay under the ban." But the reading of several ancient versions (*hehërtb* for *hehërim*) gives a better sense: **dry up**; cf. ch. l. 2. *the tongue of the Egyptian sea* is the Gulf of Suez (cf. Jos. xv. 2, 5, xviii. 19).

- And with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand
 over the river,
 And shall smite it in *the* seven streams,
 And make *men* go over dryshod.
 16 And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his
 people,
 Which shall be left from Assyria;
 Like as it was to Israel
 In the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.
- 12 And in that day thou shalt say,

with his mighty wind] Perhaps **with the fierce heat of his breath**. The word rendered "fierce heat" does not occur again in Hebrew, but a similar Arabic word is used of internal heat (either physical or mental). The phrase seems misplaced; it belongs to the figure of the drying up of the sea, not to that of shaking the hand. *over the river*] the Euphrates, as in ch. vii. 20, viii. 7. *smite it in the seven streams*] R. V. **into seven streams**. *dryshod*] lit. "in sandals."

16. *a highway*] through river and desert. This miraculous "highway" is a frequent feature in prophetic descriptions of the return from exile. Cf. ch. xxxv. 8, xl. 3, 4, xlii. 16, xlix. 11, &c.

CHAPTER XII.

forms the lyrical epilogue to the first great division of the book (ch. i. —xii.). It consists of two short hymns of praise (vv. 1, 2 and vv. 3—6) which are put into the mouth of the ransomed people. As Israel sang songs of triumph after the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. xv.), so the restored exiles shall celebrate the great salvation with such psalms of thanksgiving and joy as these. There is thus an obvious link of connexion with xi. 10—16, where the anticipations of the Messianic salvation are throughout largely coloured by reminiscences of the exodus from Egypt. Nevertheless, the secondary and imitative character of the chapter is so apparent as almost to exclude the supposition that it was written by Isaiah. Its literary affinities are with the Song of Moses, with certain parts of the Psalter, and with lyrical passages interspersed in the later prophecy of ch. xxiv.—xxvii. (see the Notes below). With the exception of the expression "Holy One of Israel" in v. 6 it presents none of the phrases distinctive of Isaiah's style; and in no other instance does that prophet close an oracle with a liturgical passage like this. Hence the opinion expressed by Ewald in 1840, that the chapter is a late addition to the book of Isaiah, has slowly won a wide acceptance among scholars.

1, 2. The first song, the singer being the individualised community, as frequently in the Pss.

O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me,

Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me
Behold, God *is* my salvation;

I will trust, and not be afraid:

For the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song;

He also *is* become my salvation.

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

And in that day shall ye say,

Praise the LORD, call upon his name,

Declare his doings among the people,

Make mention that his name *is* exalted.

Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things:

1. The introductory formula (here and in v. 4) resembles those in xxv. 9, xxvi. 1, xxvii. 2. *thou wast angry*] a word never used by any prophet, but found in Ps. ii. 12, lx. 1, lxxix. 5, lxxxv. 5. *is turned away*] The form is that of the jussive; but it is probably the contracted form of the consec. impf. which sometimes occurs in the Pss.

2. *Behold, God is my salvation*] Better: **Behold the God of my salvation** (Ps. lxxxviii. 1).

The second half of the verse is repeated almost verbally from Ex. xv. 2. *my song*] the personal suff. is omitted in Hebr., probably through defective writing.

the LORD JEHOVAH] Hebr. **Yah Yahveh**, a combination only recurring in ch. xxvi. 4. Since LXX. and other versions have only one Divine name here it is possible that the second was added in explanation of the rarer contracted form "Jah."

my salvation] The word here used (*yěshū'āh*) is not found in genuine prophecies of Isaiah (unless ch. xxxiii. 2, 6 be exceptions).

3. A promise connecting the first song with the second (vv. 4—6).

wells of salvation] (cf. Ps. lxxxvii. 7). The language is figurative, denoting the inexhaustible fulness of the Divine blessings prepared for the people of God.

4—6. The members of the redeemed community exhort each other to publish the praises of Jehovah to the world.

4. The first part exactly as Ps. cv. 1; the last clause resembles Ps. cxlviii. 13, &c.

call upon his name] lit. "call by (means of) His name," i.e. use His name (Jehovah) in solemn invocation. See 1 Ki. xviii. 24. That the expression means merely "utter" or "make known" the name, is hardly probable. The word for "*exalted*" occurs in ch. ii. 11, 17.

5. *excellent things*] "Excellence," ch. xxvi. 10; cf. Ex. xv. 1.

This *is* known in all the earth.

- 6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion:
For great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

this is known] Better as R.V. **let this be known.**

6. *Cry out*] the same word as in ch. x. 30, but in a very different sense. Cf. ch. xxiv. 14, liv. 1.

inhabitant of Zion] Lit. "inhabitrress," Jerusalem being personified as a woman, Mic. i. 11—15; Jer. xlv. 19, &c.

CH. XIII. 1—XIV. 23. THE FALL OF BABYLON.

This is the first of the collection of oracles, dealing mainly with foreign nations, which forms the second great division of the first part of the Book of Isaiah (see General Introd., pp. lxxii f.). It contains two distinct and complete pieces: (1) a prophecy of the impending sack and capture of Babylon by the Medes (xiii. 2—22), and (2) an ode of triumph to be sung by the Jews over the downfall of their oppressor, the king of Babylon (xiv. 4 b—21). These are connected by a few verses in a style different from either (xiv. 1—4 a); and the ode is followed by a couple of verses which reaffirm the doom pronounced on Babylon in the end of ch. xiii. (xiv. 22 f.). It is not impossible that the amalgamation of the two principal sections may be due to an editor; but the historical situation assumed is the same in both, and reasons for assigning them to separate authors are not to be found.

That neither the passage as a whole nor either of its component parts was written by Isaiah appears from the following considerations. (a) In Isaiah's time Babylon was either a subject province of the Assyrian Empire or engaged in unsuccessful revolt against it. Here she is represented as the supreme world-power, the glory of kingdoms, intoxicated with her own success, and exercising a cruel tyranny over many nations (xiii. 11, 19, xiv. 5 f., 12 ff., 16 f.). (b) In particular she is the power that has long held Israel in the thralldom of exile (xiv. 1—3); an event which might conceivably have been foreseen by Isaiah, but which he could not have assumed as known to the men of his time. But (c) a transference of the world-empire from Assyria to Babylon is really excluded by Isaiah's scheme of history, since he conceives the overthrow of Assyria as followed immediately by the Messianic age. (d) The style and language are not those of Isaiah; and the spirit of fierce and vindictive triumph over the fallen foe, while explicable in a writer of the exile period, would be unnatural in the case of Isaiah. The prophecy, therefore, must have been unintelligible to the contemporaries of Isaiah; and on the principle that the prophet always addresses himself primarily to the circumstances of his own time, we must assign these chapters to the closing years of the Babylonian captivity. A more exact determination of their date is scarcely possible. Even on the question whether they were written before or after the

The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain,
Exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand,
That they may go *into* the gates of the nobles.

consolidation of the Median and Persian power by Cyrus in 549, conflicting inferences are drawn from xiii. 17 (see on the verse below). It may be added that by such a view the passage is not robbed of its predictive character. It was certainly composed in anticipation of the fall of Babylon (538); and hence it is a prediction to precisely the same extent as Isaiah's own announcements of the destruction of Assyria and the deliverance of Jerusalem (Driver, *Isaiah*, p. 127).

Chap. xiii. falls into three main divisions. A subdivision of each into two nearly equal strophes (Duhm) is possible, though less clearly marked.

i. vv. 2—8. A magnificently poetical description of the impending attack.

(1) The mustering of Jehovah's host on the north-eastern mountains (2—4).

(2) The approach of the avengers, Jehovah at their head, inspiring terror and dismay in the city (5—8).

ii. vv. 9—16. The meaning of the judgment.

(1) The day of Jehovah has at last arrived, heralded by physical convulsions, to sweep wickedness and tyranny from the face of the earth (9—12).

(2) The flight of foreign merchants from the doomed city and the massacre of her population (13—16).

iii. vv. 17—22. The fate of Babylon.

(1) At length the writer lays aside the veil of poetic imagery and announces in express terms that the invaders are the pitiless barbarians of Media, and the object of their attack is Babylon (17—19).

(2) The prophecy then closes with a weird picture of the eternal desolation reserved for the imperial city.

1. The superscription, prefixed by an editor who attributed the prophecy to Isaiah.

The burden] Rather, **The utterance**, or "oracle." The word occurs ten times in the headings of this section of the book (also in ch. xxx. 6). The Heb. is *massā'*, and means literally a "lifting up (of the voice)." See 2 Kings ix. 25. The A.V., following several ancient versions, takes it in its commoner sense of "burden" (thing lifted), a confusion which seems as old as the time of Jeremiah (xxiii. 33—40) and Ezekiel (xii. 10).

which Isaiah...did see] See on i. 1, ii. 1.

2—4. Jehovah musters His hosts.

2. *Lift ye up a banner*] a signal, ch. v. 26.

upon the high mountain] Render, **upon a bare mountain**; i.e. one denuded of trees, so that the signal might be clearly distinguished.

the gates of the nobles] The city gates through which the Babylonian

- 3 I have commanded my sanctified ones,
I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger,
Even them that rejoice in my highness.
- 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of
a great people;
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered
together:
The LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.
- 5 They come from a far country, from the end of the
heaven,
Even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation,
To destroy the whole land.
- 6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand;
It shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

magnates passed to and fro. The name Babel (Bab-ilu) signifies "Gate of God."

3. Jehovah speaks.

my sanctified (or **consecrated**) *ones*] In ancient times a campaign was inaugurated with religious ceremonies (1 Sam. xiii. 9; Jer. xxii. 7, li. 28 [R.V. marg.]) and each warrior was a consecrated man (1 Sam. xxi. 5).

them that rejoice in my highness] Translate as in R.V. **my proudly exulting ones**, Zeph. iii. 11.

4. Already the prophet seems to hear from afar the din of the gathering multitude.

The noise of a multitude] Better as an exclamation, **Hark, a tumult**. And so in the next clause, **Hark, the uproar of...** The "mountains" are those beyond the Zagros range, N.E. of Babylonia, where the territory of the Medes lay. To understand them as "ideal barriers" (Cheyne) weakens the poetry of the passage.

5. The host is now seen in motion, advancing under the guidance of Jehovah to its appointed goal.

the whole land] Rather, **the whole earth**. The judgment is directed against the Babylonian Empire, which from the writer's point of view was practically co-extensive with the civilised world.

6. The verse is almost identical with Joel i. 15. On the "day of Jehovah" see on ch. ii. 12.

as a destruction from the Almighty] The Heb. phrase contains an alliteration which cannot be easily reproduced in English. The Germans render "wie Gewalt vom Gewaltigen." The word for "Almighty" is the Divine name *Shaddai* (see Ex. vi. 3), but its etymology is doubtful. According to one derivation it comes from the same root as the word for "destruction," so that we might almost venture to translate "like destruction from the Destroyer." This verse, however,

Therefore shall all hands be faint,
And every man's heart shall melt:
And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall
take hold of *them*;
They shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth:
They shall be amazed one at another;
Their faces *shall be as flames*.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh,
Cruel both *with* wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate:
And he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof
shall not give their light:
The sun shall be darkened in his going forth,
And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.
And I will punish the world for *their* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
And I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

can hardly be appealed to in support of that view, since it may imply nothing beyond the mere play upon words. (See further Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in Jewish Church*, pp. 423 f.)

7. "Hands hanging down" and "hearts melting" are frequent images of despair (ch. xix. 1; Ez. xxi. 7; Job iv. 3; Josh. vii. 5, &c.).

8. *they shall be amazed one at another*] i.e. "look in horror on each other."

their faces shall be as flames] Lit. *faces of flames are their faces*, burning with feverish excitement, or perhaps with shame (Ez. vii. 18). There are no exact parallels to the expression; cf. Joel ii. 6; Nah. ii. 10.

9—16. The middle division of the prophecy enlarges on the nature, purpose and effects of this day of Jehovah.

9. *land*] Rather, *earth*, as in v. 5.

10. "The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light," Am. v. 18.

the constellations thereof] The Heb. word (*kěšîl*) is used in the singular in Am. v. 8; Job ix. 9, xxxviii. 31, of a particular constellation, probably Orion (but according to another tradition, the star Canopus). Its meaning, 'fool' or 'foolhardy rebel,' seems to point to some legend of a Titan chained to the sky for his defiance of the gods (Job xxxviii. 31). In the plural ("the Orions") it denotes here Orion and other constellations that vie with it in brilliancy.

11, 12. Jehovah is again the speaker, as in v. 3. The prophet has already in v. 9 intimated the purpose of the judgment; here the thought is added that in its execution the existing generation will be all but

- 12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold;
Even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.
- 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth shall remove out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts,
And in the day of his fierce anger.
- 14 And it shall be as the chased roe,
And as a sheep that no *man* taketh up:
They shall every man turn to his own people,
And flee every one into his own land.
- 15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through;
And every one that is joined *unto them* shall fall by
the sword.
- 16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before
their eyes;
Their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

exterminated; so wide-spread is the wickedness and tyranny of the world.

12. *golden wedge*] Render simply **gold**. Both the words for gold are rare and poetic.

13. By the outbreak of Jehovah's wrath the material universe is shaken to its foundations. Such representations are common in the descriptions of the day of the Lord, and are not to be dismissed as merely figurative. Cf. ch. ii. 12 ff.

14—16. The dispersion and slaughter of the population of Babylon. The prophecy from this point becomes more explicit in its main reference to Babylon.

14. Those who flee to their own land are the foreign residents who had been attracted by the wealth and commerce of Babylon from all parts of the world, cf. Jer. li. 44; Nah. ii. 8, iii. 16.

a sheep that no man taketh up] Better: **sheep with none to gather them**, Nah. iii. 18. For the figure cf. 1 Kings xxii. 17; Ez. xxxiv. 5; Matt. ix. 36.

15. *Every one that is found*] Chiefly the natives of Babylon, who had no land to flee to. The phrase '*every one that is joined unto them*' is better translated, **every one that is caught**.

16. That the capture of Babylon should be marked by the atrocities here spoken of was no doubt to be expected from the character of the Medes (vv. 17 f.), but no such crimes appear to have stained the actual victory of Cyrus. According to Babylonian records he took possession of the city peacefully. (*Records of the Past*, New Ser. v. 144 ff.) Cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 9; Nah. iii. 10; Hos. xiii. 16; 2 Kings viii. 12. The last half of the verse is repeated in Zech. xiv. 2.

17, 18. The description of the character of the invaders, perhaps

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, 27
 Which shall not regard silver;
 And *as for* gold, they shall not delight in it.
Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; 18
 And they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb;
 Their eye shall not spare children.
 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, 19
 The beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,
 Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

even the mention of their name, is of the nature of a climax to the terrors of the picture.

17. *the Medes*] This Iranian people first became a leading power in Asia when it divided with the Chaldæans the spoils of the Assyrian Empire (B.C. 606), but it was not till the rise of the great conqueror Cyrus that it became a formidable enemy to Babylon. Cyrus, according to the classical historians, was originally a vassal king of the Median Empire, reigning over the narrow territory to which the name Persia or Persis was at first restricted. He is called, however, in Babylonian inscriptions "King of Anzan," which is explained by Assyriologists to be a small kingdom in the north of Elam. (See Sayce, in *Rec. of the Past*, l.c.) About the year 549 he overthrew the ruling Median dynasty and placed himself at the head of the whole empire. It has been argued by some scholars that previous to that event there could be no expectation of a conquest of Babylon by the Medes, and that therefore the prophecy must be dated between 549 and 538. Others again hold that if it had been written after 549 the enemy would have been called the Persians. Both inferences, however, are inconclusive. The first overlooks the fact that before the accession of Cyrus the Medes were a powerful nation, and indeed the only probable human agents of a chastisement of Babylon. And against the second it has to be borne in mind that the name Persia, for the united empire, made its way slowly in antiquity. In the Bible it first becomes common in the time of Ezra, although long after that we still read of Medes *and* Persians (Dan. v. 28, vi. 8, 12) or Persians and Medes (Esth. i. 3, 14, 18). Greek writers also speak of the wars of independence against Xerxes as τὰ Μηδικά. The verse, therefore, furnishes no particular indication of the date of the prophecy.

which shall not regard (regard not) silver...] They cannot be bought off by a ransom. Xenophon puts into the mouth of Cyrus in addressing the Medes the words: οὐ χρημάτων δεόμενοι σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐξήλθετε (*Cyrop.* v. 1, 20).

19. *the Chaldees' excellency*] The territory of the Chaldæans lay near the head of the Persian Gulf. Their dominion over Babylon began with Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar.

as when God overthrew, &c.] See on i. 7 and cf. Am. iv. 11, where the same phrase occurs (also Jer. l. 40).

20—22. Babylon, after its overthrow, shall be a perpetual desolation.

- 20 It shall never be inhabited,
Neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation:
Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there;
Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.
- 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there;
And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures;
And owls shall dwell there,
And satyrs shall dance there.
- 22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their
desolate houses,
And dragons in *their* pleasant palaces:

20. *the Arabian*] Cf. Jer. iii. 2. The word seems originally to mean "dweller in the desert," but ultimately acquired the force of a proper name (see Jer. xxv. 24; 2 Chr. ix. 14, &c.). The site of Babylon will be shunned even by the wandering nomad, as an accursed and "uncanny" place.

21, 22. It shall be haunted by wild beasts and creatures of demon kind, like the *jinn* of the Arabs. See ch. xxxiv. 11—15; Zeph. ii. 14 f.; Jer. l. 39, li. 37.

21. *wild beasts of the desert*] The word used means strictly "dwellers in the desert" and is applied to men in Ps. lxxii. 9. In ch. xxxiv. 14 it seems to denote a particular kind of desert creature.

doleful creatures] Probably "howlers," but what kind of howlers are meant is altogether uncertain. Some render "owls," others "jackals," &c. The word does not occur elsewhere. *Owls* should undoubtedly be *ostriches*. The Heb. name (*bēnōth ya'ānah*), as explained by Wetzstein (see Delitzsch, *Comm. on Job*, 2nd Ed., Eng. Tr., vol. II., p. 340) means "daughters of the desert." The Arabs have a similar designation for the bird,—*abu eṣ-ṣaḥārā*, "father of the desert."

satyrs shall dance there] The noun also means "goats," as in Gen. xxxvii. 31; but the old translations have mostly perceived that goat-shaped demons are here intended (so also in ch. xxxiv. 14), the same beings to which Jewish superstition offered sacrifices (Lev. xvii. 7; 2 Chron. xi. 15—A.V. "devils"). The transition from the natural to the supernatural seems strange to our minds, but in the East the belief in weird creatures (*jinn*) inhabiting waste places and dangerous spots is a commonplace.

22. *the wild beasts of the islands*] R.V. **wolves**. The word has certainly nothing to do with that for "island." It probably comes from another root meaning "to howl"; but again it is impossible to specify the particular animal.

their desolate houses] The word is *'almānōth*, "widows," which A.V. following, as so often, Jewish authorities understands figuratively. It is either a by-form or a copyist's error for *'armēnōthām*, **their palaces** (see ch. xxxiv. 13). For *dragons* render **jackals** (R.V.).

And her time *is* near to come,
And her days shall not be prolonged.

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, 14
And will yet choose Israel,
And set them in their own land:
And the strangers shall be joined with them,
And they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.
And the people shall take them, and bring them to
their place:
And the house of Israel shall possess them in the
land of the LORD
For servants and handmaids:
And they shall take them captives, whose captives
they were;
And they shall rule over their oppressors.

And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD₃
shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear,
and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to
serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the₄
king of Babylon, and say,

Chap. xiv. 1—23 contains (1) an Introduction connecting the ode with the preceding prophecy (vv. 1—4 a), (2) a song of triumph over the king of Babylon (vv. 4 b—21), (3) an Epilogue (vv. 22, 23).

1. The immediate result of the judgment on Babylon will be the emancipation of Israel from captivity.

will yet choose Israel] Rather, **will again choose**, as formerly in Egypt (cf. Zech. ii. 12).

the strangers] **the sojourner**, or protected guest; here used, as in later Hebrew, with the sense of "proselyte": ch. lvi. 3—7; Zech. ii. 11, viii. 21—23.

2. *And the people*] **And peoples** (ch. xlix. 22 f.).
shall possess them] Lit. "serve themselves heirs to them" (Lev. xxv. 46). For the idea cf. ch. lx. 10, 14, lxi. 5.

they shall take them captives, whose captives they were] Jud. v. 12.

3. *thy fear*] Rather **thy unrest**, or "trouble" (R.V.).
the hard bondage] R.V. **service**. From Ex. i. 14. The analogy of the Egyptian oppression is prominent in the writer's thoughts.

4. *this proverb*] The Hebrew word (*māshāl*) is used in a variety of senses. Originally signifying a similitude, it came naturally to denote a popular proverb or gnomic saying, and finally acquired the sense of a satire or taunt-song, as here (Hab. ii. 6; Num. xxi. 27). In ancient Israel wit seems to have passed into sarcasm as readily as in more recent

- How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!
 5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and*
 the sceptre of the rulers.
 6 He who smote the people in wrath *with* a continual
 stroke,
 He that ruled the nations in anger, *is* persecuted, *and*
 none hindereth.
 7 The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break
 forth *into* singing.
 8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of
 Lebanon, *saying*,

times. The poem which follows might with equal propriety be described as a dirge (*qinah*, *θρῆνος* in LXX.), commencing as it does with the characteristic word *'ēkh*, and exhibiting the peculiarity of the elegiac measure (the line is broken by a cæsure in such a manner that the second member is shorter than the first. See on ch. i. 21). Such ironical elegies are common in the prophets of the exile. Another striking example will meet us in ch. xlvii.

4b—21. The song of triumph over the king of Babylon is one of the finest specimens of Hebrew poetry which the Old Testament contains. A division into five strophes, each containing seven long lines, is distinctly recognisable, and the occasional deviations from strict symmetry of form are probably due to defects in the text.

4b—8. The first strophe is like a sigh of relief breathed by the whole of creation, when the disturber of its peace has vanished from the scene.

4. The line may be rendered:

How is the oppressor stilled,—stilled the insolent rage!

The translation *golden city* is an attempt to render the received text, but can hardly be justified. All the ancient versions read instead of *madhēbāh*, *marhēbāh*, a word which combines the ideas of restlessness and insolence (see ch. iii. 5).

5. *the rulers*] here used in the sense of **tyrants**.

6. *He who*] Better, as R.V., **that**; the antecedent being the staff. *is persecuted*, and *none hindereth*] R.V. “with a persecution that none restrained.” The parallelism requires instead of “persecution” a noun cognate with the verb rendered “rule,” as in the preceding line. An easy emendation (*mirḏath* for *murdāph*) supplies this; and this reading is almost universally accepted. The balance of clauses is then perfect:—

That struck the peoples in anger,—with incessant stroke;

That trod down the nations in wrath,—with unrelenting tread.

7. *they break forth into singing*] A favourite idea in the second part of the book: ch. xlv. 23, xlix. 13, liv. 1, lv. 12.

8. *the fir trees*] Some render “cypresses.”

Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee at*,
thy coming:

It stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief
ones of the earth;

It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of
the nations.

All they shall speak and say unto thee,

Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become
like unto us?

Thy pomp is brought down *to* the grave, *and* the
noise of thy viols:

The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover
thee.

no feller is come up] Assyrian kings frequently mention among their exploits the cutting of trees in Lebanon and Amanus. Nebuchadnezzar, whose inscriptions have been found on Lebanon, doubtless did the same thing.

9—11. The second strophe forms an effective contrast to the first. He who had so long troubled the earth becomes a disturbing presence in the under-world; the earth is now at rest, Sheol is troubled.

9. *Hell from beneath*] Rather, **Sheol beneath**. It is best to retain the Hebrew name of the under-world (*shē'ōl*) as is sometimes done by the Revisers, though not in this passage. An almost exact equivalent would be the Greek *Hades*. For *the dead*, render **the shades** (*rēphā'im*) as in R.V. marg.

the chief ones] lit. "the he-goats," a figurative designation of kings (Jer. l. 8; Zech. x. 3).

11. It is doubtful whether this verse continues the address of the shades. It certainly does not extend further.

For *the grave* read **Sheol**. *the noise of thy viols*] possibly indicating that the king had been cut down suddenly at a riotous feast (see xxi. 5; Dan. v.).

the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee] (The Heb. uses two distinct words for "worm.") His lot is far worse than that of other potentates. No kingly throne is reserved for him in Sheol, but as one who has been denied honourable burial on earth (v. 19) he is laid in the "recesses of the pit" (v. 15) and makes his bed in corruption.

12—15. The third strophe contains the prophet's reflection on the sudden fall of the king of Babylon. That he should go to Sheol at all was a fate never contemplated by his soaring and self-deifying pride.

- 11 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
- 12 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend *into* heaven,
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:
 I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
- 13 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
- 14 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

12. *O Lucifer, son of the morning*] In his splendour he is likened to the morning star; which was worshipped by the Babylonians under the name of Istar, and is described in Assyrian by an epithet, *mustilil* (shining star), which seems to correspond to the word here used (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, on this verse). The translation "Lucifer" (light-bearer) is quite correct, and is needlessly abandoned by the R.V. By some of the fathers the passage was applied to the fall of Satan (cf. Luke x. 18); hence the current use of Lucifer as a name of the devil.

For *weaken*, read *lay prostrate*.

13, 14. Not content with his exalted position the king aspired to equality of rank with the great gods. A similar impiety had already been put by Ezekiel into the mouth of the prince of Tyre (Ez. xxviii. 2, 6, 9, 14).

13. *the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north*] Render: **the Mount of Assembly in the uttermost north**. We have here apparently an allusion to Babylonian mythology which is partly elucidated by Assyrian inscriptions. There the chief gods are spoken of as born in "the house of the mountain-summit of the lands, the mountain of *Aralu*" (Schrader, *Cuneif. Inscr.*, *ad loc.*). The conception is very obscure, and it has not been proved that the Babylonians located their world-mountain in the north (like the Hindus and Persians). According to Jensen (*Kosmologie der Babylonier*, pp. 201 ff.) the idea of the "world-mountain" originated in the conception that the earth is itself a huge hollow mountain, resting on the primeval ocean. However that may be, there is little room for doubt that the "mount of assembly" in this verse is the mountain of *Aralu* where the great gods assemble. The opinion once prevalent that Zion is denoted was suggested by a similar phrase in Ps. xlviii. 2; but the idea is obviously out of place in the present context.

14. *I will be like the most High*] Better: **I will make myself like to the Most High**. The sense of all the previous metaphors is gathered up in this sentence. The king arrogates to himself divine honour.

15. *thou shalt be brought down to Sheol*] Such is the end of the

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, ¹⁶
and consider thee, *saying*,
Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that
did shake kingdoms;
That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed ¹⁷
the cities thereof;
That opened not the house of his prisoners?
All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, ¹⁸
Lie in glory, every one in his own house.
But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable ¹⁹
branch,
And as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust
through with a sword,

“vaulting ambition that o’erleaps itself.” The Babylonian Hades (*Aralu*) seems to have been conceived as situated *under* the mountain of the gods. The *pit* means Sheol, and the *sides of the pit* are its inmost recesses, the most dismal part of a land of darkness. These apparently are reserved for those who have not obtained honourable burial on earth (see below on vv. 18—20).

16—19. The fourth strophe. The scene here is no longer in Hades, but on the battle-field, where the dead body of the king lies unburied, exposed to the derision of men.

16. *made the earth to tremble*] Better perhaps, **troubled the earth**.

17. *opened not the house of his prisoners*] Translate as R.V. **let not loose his prisoners to their home** (a so-called pregnant construction). But from this point the rhythm is defective, and the text is almost certainly in some disorder. The immediate difficulty might be surmounted by bringing the words “every one in his house” from the end of v. 18 (where they are rhythmically superfluous) to the end of v. 17: thus (with a slight alteration):—

“That let not loose his prisoners,—each to his home.”

But a satisfactory reconstruction of the passage as a whole seems impossible.

18, 19. The contrast here is that between the honourable burial accorded to other kings and the indignity to which the king of Babylon is subjected by being deprived of sepulchral rites.

18. *every one in his own house*] This yields a perfectly good sense as it stands, the “house” being the tomb prepared by the king in his lifetime. But it forms a short half-line where a long one is required by the measure; hence the proposal to transfer the words to v. 17 (see on that verse).

19. *cast out of thy grave*] Better as in R.V., **cast forth away from thy sepulchre**, i.e. flung out unburied. The idea that the body had been *disinterred* is inconsistent with v. 20.

like an abominable branch] A worthless scion of the family.

- That go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.
- 20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial,
Because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people:
The seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.
- 21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers;
That they do not rise, nor possess the land,
Nor fill the face of the world *with* cities.

and as *the raiment of those that are slain*] Render as R.V. clothed with (i.e. "surrounded by") the slain, on the field of battle.

that go down to the stones of the pit] A difficult expression. In its present position it is most naturally understood of the hasty and ignominious burial of a dead enemy by casting stones on the body (cf. 2 Sam. xviii. 17). The rhythm, however, demands a short line at this point, and this phrase is much too long. Hence some propose to transfer the words to the beginning of v. 20, where they would open a new strophe, thus:—

"Those that are buried in graves of stone, with them shalt thou not be united in sepulture."

On this view they must be a synonym for honourable sepulture, and the "stones of the pit" would denote stone-built tombs. This seems a less natural sense. A reference to the pit of Sheol (v. 15) is hardly to be expected in this place.

20, 21. The fifth strophe. The guilt of the king of Babylon, which descends like a curse on his children and leads to their extermination. The impression of textual confusion is confirmed by the fact that this last strophe falls short by about two lines of its proper length.

20. *Thou shalt not be joined with them*] i.e. either with the kings of the nations (v. 18) or (if the transposition mentioned be adopted) with those who lie in stone sepulchres.

thou hast destroyed thy land...] The king has acted as a tyrant not only to Israel but to his own people.

shall never be renowned] Rather, *named* (R.V.). Their very names shall be forgotten.

21. *slaughter*] a place of slaughter (R.V. marg.).

that they do not rise...land] R.V. *that they rise not up, and possess the earth.*

fill the face of the world with cities] This could hardly be reckoned a crime, for it would be undoing the wrong that their father had wrought (v. 17). Some render "enemies" or gain that sense by an emendation. Others change the word *ārīm* (cities) into *īyyīm* (ruined heaps). The easiest correction is simply to omit the word, the sense being complete without it.

The elegy ends here.—The passage just considered (vv. 9—20) bears a close resemblance to Ezekiel's dirge over the fall of Pharaoh and his

For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of ²² hosts,

host (Ez. xxxii. 19 ff.). Many questions of great interest and importance are suggested by both. The most important is how far such representations are to be taken as expressing the fixed belief of the writers or their age with regard to the state after death. Their affinities with Babylonian speculation on that subject, taken in connexion with the fact that such elaborate descriptions of the underworld do not occur before the Exile, may indicate that the imagination of the writers had been influenced by their contact with the religion of their conquerors. In that case it may be reasonable to suppose that they freely availed themselves of the material thus laid to their hand merely as poetic imagery, without meaning to attribute strict objective reality to all the conceptions. At the same time there was a common basis of belief underlying the Hebrew and Babylonian ideas regarding the future state, and all that is essential to the understanding of this passage was probably familiar to the minds of the Israelites before the Exile. In the conception as here presented the following points are to be noted. (1) Sheol, which is figured as a vast subterranean region, is the common gathering-place of all the dead. They exist there as shades, *rēphā'im* (v. 9), a word which is usually explained to mean "feeble ones,"—weak, pithless adumbrations of the living form. These are represented as capable of being roused to a transient interest in human affairs by the arrival amongst them of so distinguished a personage as the king of Babylon; but their ordinary condition is one of utter inactivity, a sort of conscious death rather than life. It is true that the writer speaks only of kings and potentates, and throws little light on the state of the common man after death. Still the Old Testament as a whole knows nothing of separate spheres of existence for the righteous and for the wicked, and that idea is certainly not to be imported into the present passage. (2) We seem to find a clear trace of the antique notion that the lot of the shade in Sheol depends on the fate of the body on earth. The kings who have received due interment sit each on his throne retaining the semblance of their former greatness, while he who was "cast forth away from his sepulchre" is relegated to the "recesses of the pit." This, however, is connected with the conviction that the fate of the body is not accidental; a dishonoured death expresses the final judgment of God on a career of exceptional wickedness. And it is this judgment of God, executed on earth, which is regarded as reflected and perpetuated in the condition of the disembodied spirit. (3) In this way the idea of retribution is extended to the other world. There is indeed an essential difference between the application of the principle here given and that to which a fuller revelation has led us. As we have seen, the retribution here spoken of is only the counterpart of a retribution already manifest on earth, whereas we have learned to look to the future life to redress the inequalities of the present, and to bring about a perfect correspondence between character and destiny, never realised in this world.

And cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant,
And son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and
pools of water:

And I will sweep it with the besom of destruction,
saith the LORD of hosts.

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying,
Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass;
And as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land,
And upon my mountains tread him under foot:
Then shall his yoke depart from off them,

22, 23. The Epilogue, going back on the concluding threat of ch. xiii.

22. *son, and nephew*] A phrase recurring in Gen. xxi. 23; Job xviii. 19. The proper translation is **progeny and offspring**. In old English "nephew" means "grandson." Comp. Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, ii. 8. 29:—

But from the grandsyre to the nephewes sonne,
And all his seede, the curse doth often cleave.

(*Cambridge Comp. to the Bible*, p. 218.)

23. *the bittern*] (ch. xxxiv. 11; Zeph. ii. 14). Usually rendered "hedgehog" (R.V. **porcupine**) in accordance with the LXX. and Vulg. and the analogy of Arabic. The bittern certainly suits the scene best, and it is said to have the hedgehog's trick of rolling itself up into an unrecognisable mass. (Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 243.) *pools of water*] marshes, caused by the overflow of the Euphrates when the dykes and canals were no longer kept in repair.

CH. XIV. 24—32. TWO ISAIANIC FRAGMENTS.

i. vv. 24—27. An announcement of Jehovah's purpose to destroy the Assyrians on the soil of Canaan. In spite of the absence of a title these verses cannot without violence be explained as a continuation of the oracle on Babylon. They bear every evidence of being a genuine prophecy of Isaiah; and both in form and substance they shew an obvious resemblance to those of ch. x. 5 ff. and ch. xviii. Some critics, indeed, regard them as a misplaced fragment of one or other of these chapters. Without going so far as this we may at least with some confidence assign the passage to the same period of Isaiah's ministry, probably the early years of Sennacherib's reign.

24. *The LORD of hosts hath sworn*] cf. Am. iv. 2, vi. 8, viii. 7; Is. xlv. 23, liv. 9, lxii. 8. The formula is nowhere else used by Isaiah. *come to pass...stand*] Combined as in ch. vii. 7.

25. *my mountains*] i.e. the mountain land of Palestine.
then shall his yoke depart...] See ch. ix. 4, x. 27.

And his burden depart from off their shoulders.

This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole ²⁶ earth:

And this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall ²⁷ disannul *it*?

And his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

26, 27. This plan of Jehovah embraces the destinies of all nations (see ch. xxviii. 22, x. 23, viii. 9). The expression "the whole earth" is not to be restricted to the Assyrian Empire, nor on the other hand is the meaning that all other peoples shall suffer the same fate as Assyria; it is simply that the event announced is of world-wide importance, and affects the interests of humanity at large. This indeed followed from the ambitious designs of Assyria, which could not stop short of universal empire. But Isaiah no doubt looked deeper than this, and thought of its bearings on the religious future of mankind. The two verses are a striking testimony to the grandeur of Isaiah's conception of the Divine government.

this is the hand that is stretched out] cf. v. 26, ch. v. 25, ix. 12, &c.

ii. vv. 28—32. An oracle on Philistia. The Philistines, who are rejoicing at the fall of some cruel oppressor, are warned that the dreaded power will soon be re-established in a more terrible form than ever (v. 29). A contrast is then drawn between the miserable fate of the Philistines and the peace and security in store for Israel (v. 30). In v. 31 the warning is repeated, and it is indicated that the formidable enemy is one who comes from the north. Meanwhile ambassadors from a foreign people (no doubt the Philistines) are in Jerusalem awaiting an answer to their proposals; and the prophet gives the answer in the name of Jehovah, as he does in the case of the Ethiopian envoys in ch. xviii.

The situation which best combines the various allusions of the prophecy would seem to be the death of some Assyrian monarch, which in Isaiah's time was invariably the signal for active conspiracy among the states of Palestine (General Introd., pp. xiv f.). That the broken rod is Ahaz and the future oppressor Hezekiah, although suggested by the title, appears to be excluded by v. 31, where the invasion is said to come from the north. It is still less natural to suppose that the rod is a Jewish dominion, and the threatened danger an Assyrian supremacy, because v. 29 seems to imply that the new tyranny springs from the same root as the old. Assuming, then, that two successive Assyrian kings are meant, there are three occasions within the lifetime of Isaiah which satisfy the conditions required by the prophecy: the death of Tiglath-pileser III. in 727; of Shalmaneser IV. in 722; and of Sargon in 705. It is hardly possible with the data at our disposal to decide

- 28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.
 29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina,
 Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken:
 For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a
 cockatrice,
 And his fruit *shall be* a fiery flying serpent.
 30 And the firstborn of the poor shall feed,
 And the needy shall lie down in safety:
 And I will kill thy root with famine,
 And he shall slay thy remnant.

between these periods. Each of the monarchs named had ravaged the Philistine territory; the death of each was followed by an outbreak of disaffection in which the Philistines took a leading part, and at any time Isaiah would have given the advice to his countrymen which he virtually gives here. On the last occasion we might perhaps have expected a reference to the overthrow of Assyria, as in the answer to the Ethiopians about the same time (ch. xviii.). The first event mentioned corresponds approximately with one of the dates assigned for the death of Ahaz (727), and would therefore go far to vindicate the accuracy of the superscription.

28. The superscription. The word "burden" (*massā*) makes it improbable that the verse was written by Isaiah. It may nevertheless embody a sound tradition.

the year that king Ahaz died] Cf. ch. vi. 1. Probably 727 B.C. (but see Chronological Note, pp. lxxvi f.).

Each verse of the short oracle forms a strophe of four lines.

29. *whole Palestina*] R.V. *Philistia*, *all of thee*. On the history of the name "Palestine" see G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 4. "*All Philistia*" is addressed because the country was broken up into a number of cantons, which might not always be united in political sentiment, as they are at this time.

the rod of him that smote thee] Or simply *the rod that smote thee*, as in R.V. On the reference see introductory note above.

a cockatrice] *a basilisk* (Heb. *ṣēpha'*). See on xi. 8.

fiery flying serpent] *flying saraph*. See on ch. vi. 2 and cf. xxx. 6. It is probably a creation of the popular imagination, here used poetically. The sense of the metaphors is obvious: the power from which the Philistines had suffered seems at present to have received a fatal blow, but it will recover itself and assume a more deadly form than ever.

30. While Philistia is utterly destroyed, Israel enjoys perfect security under Jehovah's protection (see v. 32).

the firstborn of the poor] must be explained as a superlative—"the poorest of the poor." But many commentators prefer, by slightly altering the word for "firstborn," to read "in my meadow the poor shall feed" (cf. xxx. 23).

he shall slay] In spite of the change of person, the subject is still

Howl, O gate; cry, O city;
 Thou, whole Palestina, *art* dissolved:
 For there shall come from the north a smoke,
 And none *shall be* alone in his appointed times.
 What shall *one* then answer the messengers of the ³¹
 nation?
 That the LORD hath founded Zion,
 And the poor of his people shall trust in it.

Jehovah, not the Assyrian. Or the verb might be equivalent to a passive, as in R.V. ("shall be slain").

31. As in v. 29 the prophet had rebuked the premature rejoicing of the Philistines, so here he calls them to public lamentation in view of the advancing enemy.

thou...art dissolved] Render as an imper. **melt away, entire Philistia!** *Smoke* may be either a symbol of war (Jer. i. 13 f.) or it may be a vivid picture of the burning villages that mark the track of the invader. The phrase *from the north* points almost unmistakeably to the Assyrians (see on ch. x. 27).

none shall be...times] Most critics render: **there is no straggler in his battalions** (cf. ch. v. 27). The last word closely resembles that for "appointed times," but is differently vocalised, and does not occur elsewhere.

32. The oracle ends, in a manner characteristic of Isaiah, with a piece of practical advice to the political leaders of the state. Some words have probably dropped out of the first half of the verse.

the messengers of the nation] are no doubt Philistine envoys endeavouring to negotiate an alliance with Judah. They are probably to be regarded as actually waiting in Jerusalem while the court deliberates on the expediency of joining the rebellion. The prophet's answer is unhesitating.

that the LORD hath founded Zion] A leading principle of Isaiah's later ministry; see on ch. viii. 18, xxviii. 16, and General Introduction, pp. xxxvi, lxii.

the poor of his people...] Better as R.V., **in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge.**

CH. XV. XVI. AN ORACLE ON MOAB.

These chapters describe a terrible disaster which has overtaken, or is about to overtake, the proud and hitherto prosperous nation of Moab. Ch. xvi. 13 f. is a postscript, which states unambiguously that an earlier prophecy is here taken up and reaffirmed in its substance, the time of its fulfilment being fixed within a term of three years. The language leaves it uncertain whether the original composition was strictly a prophecy or a poetic lament over a visitation which the writer had actually witnessed. The element of prediction appears in xv. 9 and xvi. 12; but the rest of the passage reads like a description of current events, and

certainly exhibits a most minute and accurate knowledge of the geography of the trans-Jordanic region. The writer betrays a certain sympathy with the misfortunes of Moab, although he expresses the conviction that the notorious arrogance of that people demanded a retribution such as it has experienced.

The question of date and authorship is complicated by the peculiar form in which the oracle is presented. It is obvious that the Epilogue (xvi. 13 f.) belongs to a later date than the body of the prophecy, and there is nothing whatever to suggest that both are from the same author. The internal evidence, indeed, is strongly opposed to such an hypothesis. While the Epilogue bears every mark of Isaiah's rapid and pregnant style that could be expected in so short a piece, the original oracle (xv. 1—xvi. 12) presents a singular contrast to the prophecies of Isaiah. The pathetic, elegiac strain of this passage, its outflow of purely human sympathy towards the victims of the calamity, its poverty in religious ideas, and its diffuse and laboured style, combine to stamp it with a character foreign to his genius. And this general impression is confirmed by an examination of the vocabulary, which differs widely from that of Isaiah. On these and other grounds the majority of critics since Gesenius have been led to the conclusion that we have here the work of some unknown prophet, which was republished by Isaiah with an appendix from his own hand.

With regard to the date of the original prophecy the chief indications are these: (1) Although the assailants of Moab are nowhere named, we may at least infer from the fact that the fugitives took refuge in Edom (xvi. 1), that their country had been invaded from the north. (2) It also appears from xvi. 1—6 that at this time a strong monarch sat on the throne of Judah and held the Edomites in subjection (see the notes below). This last circumstance would seem to take us back at least to the days of Uzziah, the suzerainty of Edom having been lost in the beginning of the reign of Ahaz (2 Ki. xvi. 6) and never recovered during the lifetime of Isaiah. Perhaps the most plausible conjecture that has been offered is that of Hitzig (adopted by a number of subsequent commentators), that the prophecy refers to the subjugation of Moab by the North Israelites under Jeroboam II., the contemporary of Uzziah. It is true that there is no particular mention of this campaign in the Old Testament, but we know that Jeroboam extended the boundaries of his kingdom to the "sea of the Arabah" (2 Ki. xiv. 25; Am. vi. 14), and it is reasonable to suppose that this involved an invasion of Moab. In every respect the circumstances of the time are in harmony with the allusions of the prophecy. Hitzig's further suggestion, however, that the author was Jonah the son of Amittai (2 Ki. xiv. 25), though ingenious, rests on no solid foundation. There are two earlier wars of North Israel against Moab which might conceivably be thought of in this connexion. One is the conquest of the country by Omri in the 9th century, known to us from the famous Moabite Stone, which commemorates the war of revenge waged by Mesha against Ahab. The other is the campaign of Jehoram, Ahab's son, in alliance with Jehoshaphat king of Judah (2 Ki. iii.). This can hardly be the occasion of the prophecy, since at that time Judah took part in the subjugation of Moab,

and would not be likely to be appealed to by the fugitives for succour (xvi. 1 ff.). Nevertheless the Biblical account of that campaign throws a valuable light on some features of the passage, and illustrates the barbarity with which these frontier wars were conducted. We read that the allies "beat down the cities; and on every good piece of land they cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the fountains of water, and felled all the good trees: until in Kir-hareseth only they left the stones thereof" (2 Ki. iii. 25). We can readily suppose that Jeroboam's invasion was carried out with equal thoroughness.

The date of the Epilogue (assuming it to be Isaiah's) is comparatively unimportant. There is no doubt that Isaiah has the Assyrians in view as the agents of the Divine sentence against Moab. Perhaps the most likely time for such a prediction would be about 711, when the Moabites were in revolt against Sargon. At the time of Sennacherib's great expedition they appear to have held aloof from the conspiracy and maintained their allegiance to Assyria.

The passage falls into three sections:

i. Ch. xv. The distress of Moab. In one night her two chief cities have been ruined (v. 1); the sanctuaries are crowded with despairing suppliants, and a cry of agony ascends from all her public places (2—4). The fugitives are then seen making their way through the desolate country, and collecting their possessions at the brook of the Arabah, in order to carry them over into Edom (5—7). For the war-cry has circled round the whole land so that no refuge can be found within it (8), and yet worse things are in store for the survivors (9, xvi. 2).

ii. Ch. xvi. 1—6. Moab vainly seeks protection from Jerusalem. From Edom the fugitives are represented as sending a present (v. 1) to Jerusalem, along with a piteous and flattering appeal to the Jewish monarchy (3, 4; v. 2 appears to break the connexion) whose glories are extolled in terms almost worthy of a Messianic prophecy (5). But the petition is rejected because of the well-known pride and faithlessness of the Moabitish nationality (6).

iii. xvi. 7—12. There thus remains no hope for Moab, and the poet once more strikes up a lamentation over the ruined vineyards of the once fertile country where the vintage song is now stilled for ever (7—10). The personal sympathy of the writer finds clearer expression here than in the earlier part of the poem (9, 11); although his last word must be a religious application of the calamity of Moab as proving the impotence of its national deities (12).

iv. Then follows the Epilogue (xvi. 13, 14), really a new prophecy announcing the fall of Moab within a very brief space of time.

The parallel prophecy on Moab in Jer. xlviii. is a greatly amplified variation of this ancient oracle. With the exception of xv. 1, xv. 8—xvi. 5 and xvi. 12 ff. nearly every verse in these two chapters occurs in a more or less altered form in Jeremiah (the references are given in the notes below). A comparison of the two passages affords an instructive illustration of the freedom used by prophetic writers in handling the remains of ancient literature.

1. The verse stands somewhat apart from the sequel of the poem. It announces the catastrophe which has placed the entire country at the

15 The burden of Moab.

Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, *and*
brought to silence;

Because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, *and*
brought to silence;

2 He is gone up *to* Bajith, and *to* Dibon, the high
places, to weep:

mercy of the invaders, viz. the fall of the two chief cities of Moab. What follows is a description, not of the further progress of the campaign, but first of the universal mourning caused by this sudden blow, and second, of the flight of the inhabitants. The opening word *because* seems to have the force of an interjection, equivalent to "yea" or "surely."

in the night] may be meant literally (by a night attack), or we may render "in a night," i.e. "suddenly."

Ar] the capital of Moab, lay on the Arnon (Num. xxi. 15, 28). It is not to be confounded (as is sometimes done) with the later capital Rabba, which lies about 10 miles further south. *Kir of Moab* is the modern Kerak, some 17 miles S. of the Arnon. It is perhaps identical with *Kir-hareseth* or *Kir Heres* (ch. xvi. 7, 11; 2 Ki. iii. 25); its situation has always been considered well-nigh impregnable. These two cities were both S. of the Arnon and therefore within the proper territory of Moab. Those mentioned in vv. 2—4 on the other hand were in the fertile district to the north (now called El-Belka), which Israel claimed for the tribes of Reuben and Gad. The possession of this coveted tract of country was one great motive of the interminable wars between the two nations. Mesha's inscription on the Moabite Stone is really an account of the reconquest of this region from Ahab. At the time of the prophecy Moab must have long held undisputed possession of these lands.

2—4. The wailing of Moab.

2. (Cf. Jer. xlviii. 37.) *He is gone up...to weep*] The sense of the clause is uncertain. If *Bayith* be a proper name the best rendering would be that of R.V. marg. **Bayith and Dibon are gone up to the high-places to weep.** But *Bayith* enters so frequently into compound place-names in this region (*Beth-Diblathaim*, *Beth-Baal-meon*, *Beth-Bamoth*) that it is hardly likely to have been used alone of a particular town. Some accordingly take it in its ordinary sense of "house" (here "temple") and translate, "He is gone up to the temple, and Dibon to the high places...."—a very harsh construction. The most satisfactory solution of the difficulty is that proposed by Duhm, who changes *bayith* into *bath* and reads **the daughter of Dibon** (Jer. xlviii. 18) **is gone up to the high places....** The "high places" are of course the local sanctuary.

Dibon (where the Moabite Stone was found) is only a few miles from the Arnon, and is naturally the first to receive tidings of the fall of the southern fortresses. On the whole the description observes the geographical order south to north.

Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba :
 On all their heads *shall be* baldness, *and* every beard
 cut off.
 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sack- 3
 cloth :
 On the tops of their houses, and in their streets,
 Every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.
 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh : 4
 Their voice shall be heard *even* unto Jahaz :
 Therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out ;
 His life shall be grievous unto him.
 My heart shall cry out for Moab ; 5
 His fugitives *shall flee* unto Zoar,

Moab shall howl] Better *howleth* (other verbs also to be translated as presents), a peculiar onomatopoetic form occurring also in *v.* 3 and *xvi.* 7.

Nebo] is a town mentioned on the Moabite Stone near the mountain of the same name. It lay due east of the mouth of the Jordan ; *Medeba* a short distance to the S. For *over* render *on*.

on all their heads shall be baldness...] On the signs of mourning mentioned here and in *v.* 3 see *ch.* iii. 24, xxii. 12 ; *Mic.* i. 16 ; *Job* i. 20 ; *Jer.* xli. 5.

3. (*Jer.* xlviii. 37 f.) *on the tops of their houses*] See on xxii. 1. The word *streets* should not be used twice ; substitute in the second case *broad places* (as in R.V.).

weeping abundantly] lit. "going down in weeping," an unusually strong figure. In other passages the eye is said to "go down in tears" (*Jer.* ix. 18 ; *Lam.* i. 16, iii. 48) ; but nowhere else is the whole being spoken of as dissolved in weeping.

4. (Cf. *Jer.* xlviii. 34.) *Heshbon* and *Elealeh* (often mentioned together) are respectively about 4 and 6 miles N.E. of Nebo. Heshbon, once the capital of the Amorites (*Num.* xxi. 26) and afterwards an Israelitish city (*Num.* xxxii. 37 ; *Josh.* xiii. 17, xxi. 39), is at the time of the prophecy in the possession of Moab. The site of *Jahaz*, where Sihon gave battle to the Israelites (*Num.* xxi. 23), has not been discovered ; probably it was some distance south from Heshbon.

the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out] omit "shall" with R.V. Cf. *ch.* xxxiii. 7. The "heroes of Moab" are mentioned in a similar plight in *Jer.* xlviii. 41.

his life shall be grievous unto him] Rather, as in R.V., *his soul trembleth within him* (ethical dative).

5—9. The flight of the Moabites.

5. (*Jer.* xlviii. 34, 5, 3.) The new theme is introduced by an expression of the writer's sympathy with the homeless fugitives : *My heart crieth out for Moab* (cf. *xvi.* 9, 11).

his fugitives] R.V. renders less suitably "her nobles." The word as

A heifer of three years old :

For *by* the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up ;

For *in* the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate :

For the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.

pointed means "bolts," which is here taken as a symbol for princes. But it is better, with the Targum and nearly all modern commentators, to change the vowel, and translate "fugitives" as in xliii. 14, where, curiously enough, the A.V. gives the same rendering as the R.V. here. The R.V. however is right in using the fem. "her"; Moab is here regarded not as a people but as a land.

Zoar (Gen. xix. 22) lies near the S.E. corner of the Dead Sea; the flight therefore is southward, towards Edom.

a heifer of three years old] R.V. is better: to Eglath-shelishiyah; i.e. probably, "the third Eglath." The locality is not known.

the mounting up (the ascent, R.V.) of Luhith is located by Eusebius' Onomasticon between Rabba and Zoar.

the way of Horonaim] Jeremiah (xlviii. 5) speaks of "the slope of H.," which lay apparently (v. 34) between Zoar and Eglath-shelishiyah.

6. (Jer. xlviii. 34.) *the waters of Nimrim* are generally supposed to be connected with Beth-nimrah (Num. xxxii. 36), now Tell-nimrin, on the Wadi Shaib, flowing into the Jordan about 8 miles from its mouth. A place in the south of Moab would perhaps suit the context better, and explorers have found a Wadi Numeirah running into the Dead Sea a little south of Kerak. Eusebius also (Onomast.) says that the place was known in his day under the name Βηρυμαρην (= the Heb. *mê Nimrim*, "waters of N."), and lay to the N. of Zoar. On the stopping of the waters by an enemy, see 2 Ki. iii. 25.

hay...grass] Better: grass...tender grass (R.V.).

7. (Jer. xlviii. 36.) The fugitives have now reached the border of their own land, and prepare to cross into Edom. The boundary between the two countries was formed by the Wadi el-Ahsa ("valley of water-pits," the scene of the miracle in 2 Ki. iii. 16 ff. See Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in Jewish Ch.* p. 147). In all probability this Wadi is identical with *the brook of the willows* here mentioned. There is, however, some doubt about the correct translation of the name, arising from its similarity to the "brook of the wilderness" in Am. vi. 14 (here pl. *‘ārābīm*, there sing. *‘ārābāh*. Cf. 2 Ki. xiv. 25 "sea of the *‘ārābāh*"). Some regard the word here as an irregular pl. of that used by Amos, and render "brook of the wastes." But the two brooks are not necessarily identical, and even if they are, the translation "willows" (or rather, "poplars") is perhaps to be preferred. Cf. ch. xlv. 4; Ps. cxxxvii. 2, &c., for the name of the tree.

Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that 7
which they have laid up,

Shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.

For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; 8

The howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling
thereof unto Beer-elim.

For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: 9

For I will bring more upon Dimon,

Lions upon him that escapeth of Moab,

And upon the remnant of the land.

the abundance] is lit. "surplus." *that which they have laid up* is in Heb. a single word, meaning something entrusted for safe keeping. Instead of *carry away* to read *carry over*.

8. Summing up the effect of the previous description and explaining the forsaking of the land.

the cry (of destruction, v. 5) *is gone round...*] We should expect the two places in the second half of the verse to mark the extreme limits of the country—the "Dan and Beersheba" of Moab. *Eglaim* is probably the village *Αγαλείμ* mentioned by Eusebius as lying 8 Roman miles S. of Rabba. *Beer-elim* ("well of the mighty ones"?) is unknown, but has been plausibly identified with the "well" (*Bē'ēr*) of Num. xxi. 16—18, in northern Moab.

9. *the waters of Dimon*] *Dimon* is generally supposed to be another form of *Dibon*, chosen for the sake of an alliteration with the word for "blood" (*dām*). The conjecture may be taken for what it is worth; it has the authority of Jerome, who says, "usque hodie indifferenter et Dimon et Dibon hoc oppidulum dicitur," and we know of no other place Dimon.

I will bring more (lit. "additional [evils]") *upon Dimon*] This is the first strictly prophetic utterance in the passage; the speaker is Jehovah.

lions upon...Moab] Better: **upon the fugitives of Moab** (sc. I will bring) **a lion**. The "lion" is undoubtedly a symbol for a terrible conqueror, though it is difficult to say who is meant. It can hardly be Jeroboam II., who has already done his worst, and it is still less likely that Judah is meant. The peculiar prophetic form of the latter part of the verse has suggested to some commentators that it may have been inserted by Isaiah in the original oracle. In that case the "lion" would almost of necessity denote the Assyrians.

CH. XVI.

1—6. Arrived in Edom, the Moabitish refugees are within the sphere of Judah's political influence (see Introd. Note). Their first anxiety, therefore, is to secure protection and the right of asylum by sending an embassy to Jerusalem.

- 16 Send ye the lamb *to* the ruler of the land
 From Sela to the wilderness,
 Unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
 2 For it shall be, *that*, as a wandering bird cast out of
 the nest,
 So the daughters of Moab shall be *at* the fords of
 Arnon.
 3 Take counsel, execute judgment;

1. *Send ye the lamb*] R.V. **the lambs**. The imper. expresses dramatically the result of the deliberations of the Moabites. The word "lamb" is to be taken collectively; it denotes the tribute in kind which the Moabites had been accustomed to pay to the kings of Israel (2 Ki. iii. 4), but which they now propose to send to the king of Judah, the "ruler of the land" (of Edom).

from Sela to the wilderness] R.V. less appropriately "which is toward the wilderness." The wilderness is the desert tract between Sela and Jerusalem which would have to be traversed by the messengers of Moab. *Sela* ("rock"), a city of Edom (2 Ki. xiv. 7), is commonly supposed from the identity of the designations to be the later Petra. There is, however, no positive evidence in support of the identification; and Jud. i. 36 seems to point to a locality near the southern end of the Dead Sea (See Moore, *Commentary on Judges*, pp. 56 f.).

the mount...Zion] ch. x. 32.

2. The verse gives no good sense in its present position. Not only does it obscure the connexion between v. 1 and v. 3, but its language of prediction reveals an affinity with v. 9. It has probably been misplaced (so Duhm), and the fact that the Moabites are represented as at "the fords of Arnon," instead of in Edom, confirms the impression that we have here an addition to the original prophecy. The images of the **wandering birds** and the **scattered nest** (render as in R.V.) remind us of Isaiah (ch. x. 14, xxxi. 5). The *daughters of Moab* are the provincial towns of Moab, or their inhabitants (cf. Ps. xlviii. 11).

3—5. The address of Moab, through its ambassadors, to the court of Judah. Most of the older commentators took a different view of these verses, holding that here the prophet points out to the Moabites the way of national salvation through the practice of righteousness, and exhorts them in particular to shew kindness to any Israelitish refugees who might seek a home in that country. This interpretation appears to be followed by the A.V. (see on v. 4). But such an exhortation is altogether out of keeping with the tone of the prophecy, and would be very ill-timed in the circumstances to which Moab was then reduced. The continuity of thought is far better maintained on the view given above, which is that of most recent scholars.

3. *Take counsel, execute judgment*] Or, **apply counsel, perform arbitration**; i.e. "adopt wise and effectual measures to defend us from our enemies."

Make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the
noonday ;

Hide the outcasts ; bewray not him that wandereth.

Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab ;

Be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler : 4

For the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth,

The oppressors are consumed out of the land.

And in mercy shall the throne be established : 5

And he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of
David,

Judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

We have heard of the pride of Moab ; *he is* very 6
proud :

make thy shadow as the night...] Be to us as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (ch. xxxii. 2).
bewray not] lit. "uncover not."

4. *Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab*] Rather, **Let the outcasts of Moab sojourn with thee** (as protected guests). This implies a slight change of the vowel points, but has the authority of the chief ancient versions in its favour. The A.V. is a correct translation of the text as pointed, and far preferable to that of R.V., which joins the word Moab to the next clause, a construction unnatural in the extreme, although suggested by the Heb. accents. The vocative use of "Moab" in A.V., and probably also in the Massoretic text, implies that vv. 3—5 are conceived as an address to the Moabites.

for the extortioner is at an end...] The rest of the verse cannot, in this form, be uttered by the Moabites. We may either suppose with Dillmann that a word meaning "until" has been lost, or (better) with Hitzig take the clauses as protasis to v. 5, "for *when* the extortioner, &c." This is perhaps preferable to regarding it as a reflection of the prophet himself.

the spoiler] Strictly **spoiling** (R.V.).

5. *And in mercy*] If we follow Hitzig's view of v. 4 this would be rendered "then in mercy." The phraseology of the verse is Messianic (see esp. ch. ix. 6) but not exclusively so (cf. Prov. viii. 28). In the lips of the Moabites the language is that of extravagant and (as v. 6 appears to intimate) insincere adulation. It implies an offer of perpetual submission on the part of the Moabites to the Davidic dynasty, and therefore the question whether the throne be that of Judah or that of Moab is immaterial.

and he shall sit...judging] Better: **and there shall sit upon it in faithfulness in the tabernacle of David** (cf. Am. ix. 11) **one who judgeth, &c.**

hasting righteousness] i.e. as R.V. has it, **swift to do righteousness.**

6. (Jer. xlvi. 29, 30.) The prayer is rejected. The writer, speak-

Even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath:
But his lies *shall* not *be* so.

7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl:

For the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn;
 surely *they are* stricken.

8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, *and* the vine of Sibmah:

The lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof,

They are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderness:

Her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.

ing in the name of his countrymen, exposes the hollowness of Moab's professions of allegiance and submission, as altogether opposed to the arrogant spirit for which the nation was notorious. On the pride of Moab cf. (besides Jer. xlviii. 29) ch. xxv. 11; Zeph. ii. 8. The national spirit has found an enduring monument in the inscription of the Moabite Stone.

but *his lies shall not be so*] Better: **the unreality of his pratings** (a contemptuous word, cf. ch. xlv. 25). R.V. "his boastings are nought."

7, 8. (Cf. Jer. xlviii. 31, 32.) Moab's last hope being thus disappointed, the poet resumes his lament over the doomed people.

7. *the foundations*] R.V. renders rightly **raisin-cakes**. These cakes of compressed grapes are mentioned less as an article of commerce than as a delicacy used at religious feasts (cf. Hos. iii. 1, R.V.). The word never means "foundations." The parallel passage in Jeremiah substitutes the tamer "men." *Kir-hareseth* is the same as Kir-heres (v. 11) and perhaps identical with Kir of Moab (xv. 1).

surely they are stricken] Better, as R.V.: **utterly stricken** (apposition to "ye").

8. *the fields*] means here as in Deut. xxxii. 32 "vineyards."

the vine of Sibmah] Sibmah, in the vicinity of Heshbon, must have been famous for a choice variety of vines, which are here described by a title resembling that used in ch. v. 2 for the "choicest vine" of Jehovah's vineyard.

the lords of the heathen...thereof] Better: **whose choice grapes struck down** (i.e. intoxicated) **the lords of the nations**. For the figure see ch. xxviii. 1. The wine of Sibmah was found on the tables of princes far and near, and its potent effects were well known.

The remainder of the verse celebrates the extensive cultivation of this variety of the vine on the east of the Jordan. The writer is not thinking of anything so prosaic as the export trade in the wine of Sibmah; he represents the whole vine culture of the district under the image of a

Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah :

I will water thee *with* my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh :

For the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.

And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field ;

And in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting :

The treaders shall tread out no wine in *their* presses ; I have made *their vintage* shouting to cease.

Wherefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab,

And mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place,

single vine, which reached to Jazer in the north, strayed to the desert on the east, and passed to the (Dead) Sea on the west.

9—11. The poet gives vent to his sympathy for Moab. These verses are amongst the most beautiful in the poem.

9. (Jer. xlviii. 32.) *with the weeping of Jazer* i.e. in sympathy with the weeping of J. *I will water thee* lit. drench thee.

for the shouting...fallen Render with R.V. : for upon thy summer-fruits (or rather "fruit-gathering") and upon thy harvest the battle shout is fallen. The word for "shout" (*hêdād*) is used both of the joyous shout of the wine-treaders (Jer. xxv. 30) and of the wild war-cry of soldiers in a charge (Jer. li. 14). It has the former sense in v. 10, but the latter here. "Harvest" is used for "vintage" (*qāṣîr* for *bāṣîr*) as in ch. xviii. 5 (see the note).

10. (Jer. xlviii. 33.) *shouting* and *vintage shouting* are entirely different words; the first may be translated by joyful noise as in R.V.

the treaders shall tread out no wine i.e. there shall be none treading wine. In the last clause—"I have stilled"—the voice of Jehovah is again heard; some critics, however, read "is stilled."

11. (Jer. xlviii. 36.) *my bowels shall sound like a harp* omit "shall" with R.V. The poet's emotion flows forth spontaneously in the strains of the elegy. The bowels are the seat of the more intense emotions (Job xxx. 27), especially of compassion (Jer. iv. 19, xxxi. 20; Cant. v. 4). *Kir-haresh* Kir-heres. See on v. 7.

12. The failure of Moab's religious confidence. The verse reproduces the thought of xv. 2, at the beginning of the elegy. It reads thus : and when Moab appears, when he wearies himself, upon the high place, and enters his sanctuary to pray, he shall prevail nothing. Ewald however turns the verse into a promise of the conversion of Moab, by

That he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

- 13 This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.
- 14 But now the LORD hath spoken, saying,
Within three years, as the years of a hireling,
And the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all
that great multitude;
And the remnant *shall be* very small *and* feeble.

continuing the protasis to the end of the present text, and completing the sense as follows (guided by Jer. xlviii. 13): "...and prevails nothing, **then he shall be ashamed of Chemosh, and turn to Jehovah.**"

13, 14. The Epilogue. See Introductory Note.

13. *since that time*] Render **aforetime**. The expression is used both of the recent past (as in 2 Sam. xv. 34) and of a remote or even immemorial past (as Prov. viii. 22; Ps. xciii. 2). The sense here is indeterminate.

14. If ch. xv. 1—xvi. 12 describe real events, the verse shews that in the interval Moab had recovered some measure of its former prosperity.

as the years of a hireling] As the hireling serves for the stipulated time, but not a moment longer, so the judgment on Moab shall not be deferred beyond the space of three years (cf. ch. xxi. 16).

the glory of Moab (v. 6) shall be contemned] or "contemptible."

the remnant...feeble] lit. "the remnant shall be small, little (ch. x. 25, xxix. 17—of time), not strong." It is hazardous to assume that the "remnant" here is the nucleus of a regenerated Messianic community.

CH. XVII. 1—11. THE APPROACHING OVERTHROW OF DAMASCUS AND NORTH ISRAEL.

This oracle, the Isaianic authorship of which is beyond question, should be read *after* ch. ix. 8—x. 4 and *before* ch. vii. It deals mainly with the fate of the Northern Kingdom; but the combination of Syria and Ephraim in one prophecy shews that the league between these two nations had already been formed. With a serenity of faith which is more akin to the contemptuous attitude of ch. vii. 4 than to the impassioned utterances of ix. 8 ff., the prophet discloses the inevitable issues of an alliance based on practical rejection of Jehovah and the adoption of foreign idolatries (vv. 10f.). The date is certainly prior to the Assyrian conquest of Damascus (c. 732), and since there is no mention of the outbreak of hostilities against Judah, we may fix it in the early days of the coalition (c. 735).

The passage divides itself into four sections:—

i. vv. 1—3. An announcement of the impending ruin of the kingdom of Damascus, Israel's bulwark against the Assyrians.

The burden of Damascus.

17

Behold, Damascus *is* taken away from *being* a city,
And it shall be a ruinous heap.

The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken:

2

They shall be for flocks,

Which shall lie down, and none shall make *them*
afraid.

The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim,

3

ii. vv. 4—6. A figurative description of the fate of Ephraim: his strength shall be consumed until only an insignificant remnant is left.

iii. vv. 7, 8. The effect of this display of the Divine power on men's religious attitude.

iv. vv. 9—11. A renewed description of the judgment, which is shewn to be the fruit of Israel's apostasy and devotion to heathen cults.

1—3. The fate of Damascus.

1. *The burden of Damascus*] See on ch. xiii. 1. The title explains why the prophecy was included amongst those against foreign nations, but is not quite accurate as a description of its contents. The overthrow of Damascus, although mentioned first, is but an incident of the humiliation of its ally Ephraim, which is the principal theme of the oracle.

a ruinous heap] The words in Heb. are in apposition; one of them is an anomalous formation, is wanting in the LXX., and is rejected by some critics as possibly a dittography.

2. *The cities of Aroer*] Hardly, "the (two) cities Aroer" (gen. of appos.), as a name for the trans-Jordanic territory. If Aroer be really a proper name, the phrase must be explained by the analogy of Jos. xiii. 17 "the daughter cities of A." But where was Aroer? The best-known town of the name, that on the Arnon (Num. xxxii. 34; Deut. ii. 36, &c.), is much too far south and belonged to Moab. There seems to have been another in Ammon (Jos. xiii. 25), but it too is outside the territory of Damascus and can scarcely have been important enough to give its name to a district. We must either *assume* an unknown Aroer in Syria, or take the word in an appellative sense ("the ruined cities are forsaken") or else adopt the text of the LXX., which reads "(Damascus shall be) deserted for ever" (omitting "cities").

shall be for flocks...afraid] cf. v. 17, xxxii. 14, and Zeph. iii. 13; Job xi. 19.

3. *The fortress also...Ephraim*] Perhaps: **And the bulwark shall be removed from Ephraim**, meaning the kingdom of Damascus, which had been like a breakwater, sheltering Israel from the Assyrian onslaught. It is, however, equally possible to understand the "fortress" of Samaria, or collectively of the fortified cities of North Israel; and the parallelism with the next clause may be thought to favour this sense. But the mention of Samaria seems premature in this stanza, which deals with the ruin of Syria.

And the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria:

They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

- 4 And in that day it shall come to pass,
That the glory of Jacob shall be made thin,
 And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
- 5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn,
 And reapeth the ears *with* his arm;
 And it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree,
 Two *or* three berries in the top of the uppermost bough,
 Four *or* five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof,

and the remnant of Syria: they shall be] A.V. here follows the accentuation of the Hebrew; it is better to neglect it and render **and the remnant of Syria shall be**, &c., letting the first member of the verse end with "Damascus."

4—6. The fate of Ephraim, in three figures: wasting disease; the reaping of corn; the gathering of olives.

4. *in that day]* simultaneously with the judgment on Syria. *the glory of Jacob]* i.e. his might, his population, his prosperity, &c. (cf. v. 3). *made thin]* better, **enfeebled**. *fatness...lean]* cf. ch. x. 16.

5. The succeeding pictures are exceedingly graphic,—an evidence of Isaiah's intense interest in rural life. The reaper gathers the stalks of wheat with one hand and with the other cuts off the ears close to the head.

and it shall be...Rephaim] Render as R.V. **and it shall be as when one gleaneth ears**, &c. See Ruth ii. 2, 7, 15 ff. The clause might perhaps be read as the beginning of v. 6; one simile passing insensibly into another. The "valley of Rephaim," (= "valley of the giants,") Jos. xv. 8, xviii. 16 (cf. 2 Sam. v. 18, 22, xxiii. 13),—a fertile plain to the south of Jerusalem where Isaiah had watched the reapers and gleaners at work.

6. *Yet gleaning grapes...olive tree]* Render (cf. R.V.) **And gleanings shall be left in it as at the beating of an olive tree**. The olives were struck down from the higher branches with a stick (ch. xxiv. 13; Deut. xxiv. 20); the few that were overlooked were left for the poor.

the uppermost bough] The Hebr. word does not occur again except in v. 9, where (if correct) it must bear a different sense.

the outmost fruitful branches] Render, **the branches of the fruitful tree**,—the last word containing perhaps a play on the name Ephraim.

Saith the LORD God of Israel.

At that day shall a man look to his Maker, 7
And his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of
Israel.

And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his 8
hands,

Neither shall respect *that* which his fingers have made,
Either the groves, or the images.

In that day shall his strong cities be 9

7, 8. These verses do not necessarily point to a conversion of the few surviving Ephraimites. They rather describe the impression produced by the vindication of Jehovah's righteousness on mankind at large. Both in thought and structure, they interrupt the continuity of the oracle, and may have been inserted later (doubtless by the prophet himself). If they are removed we have three equal strophes, the first two ending with a "saith Jehovah," and the last two beginning with "in that day."

7. *look to his Maker*] cf. xxii. 11. "Look to," i.e. regard with trust and veneration.

8. *the work of his hands...that which his fingers have made*] phrases used of idols in ch. ii. 8, 20, xxxi. 7.

the altars...either the groves or the images] These words overburden the rhythm of the verse and are probably explanatory glosses. An allusion to the brazen-altar of Ahaz (2 Ki. xvi. 10—13) is far-fetched, even if not absolutely excluded by the date. The two last-mentioned objects are never referred to elsewhere by Isaiah.

the groves] R.V., rightly, **the Asherim**. The *Ashērah* or Sacred Pole was an emblem of divinity which seems to have stood regularly by the side of the altar in a Canaanitish sanctuary (Jud. vi. 13, 25; Deut. xvi. 21; 2 Ki. xviii. 4, &c.). It is regarded by some as an artificial survival of the sacred tree, under which the altar stood; by others as the symbol (or image) of a goddess of the same name. Whether a goddess *Ashērah* was actually worshipped is a much controverted point; if so, she was probably nothing more than an impersonation of the material symbol here referred to. (See Robertson Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, Revd. Ed. pp. 187 ff.)

images] probably **sun-pillars**: R.V. "sun-images." The word (*ḥammānīm*, pl.) only occurs in ch. xxvii. 9; 2 Chr. xiv. 5, xxxiv. 4, 7; Ez. vi. 4, 6; Lev. xxvi. 30. It seems to be connected with Baal-Hammān, a Phœnician deity (best known from the Carthaginian inscriptions) whose name appears to designate him as "Lord of the sun's heat," (cf. the Hebrew *ḥammāh* used in poetry of the sun: Ps. xix. 6; Job xxx. 28; Cant. vi. 10; Is. xxiv. 23, xxx. 26). The "sun-pillars" were probably emblems of this deity.

9—11. Continued from v. 6. The rejection of Jehovah leads to failure and disappointment.

9. *his strong cities*] cf. v. 10,—the "Rock of thy strength."

As a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch,
Which they left because of the children of Israel :
And there shall be desolation.

- 10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
And hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength,
Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants,

as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch] Rather, if the text must be kept: "as the deserted places of the forest and the height" (so R.V.). For "forest" cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 15, 19; 2 Chr. xxvii. 4; Ez. xxxi. 3 ("shroud"). "Height" is the word rendered "uppermost bough" in v. 6, which A.V. here follows. The construction in A.V. is altogether at fault, and the meaning "bough" cannot possibly be retained. But this is a case where the LXX. gives the clue to the true text, which reads **like the deserted places of the Amorite and the Hivvite** (see R.V. marg.). This alone gives an intelligible force to the next clause, and the textual change is comparatively slight save that the two words have been transposed ("Hivvite and Amorite").

which they left because of] More strictly, **which they forsook before**, &c. The passive "were forsaken" (R.V.) is only adopted because the previous clause contains no suitable subject; the LXX. rendering supplies this defect, and at the same time makes the reference clear.

10. *God of thy salvation]* The only occasion on which this important term (Heb. *yesh'a*) is used by Isaiah, although it forms an element of his own name.

rock of thy strength] A very frequent name of God, cf. ch. xxx. 29, xlv. 8 (R.V.); Deut. xxxii. (passim); Ps. xix. 14, xxvii. 5, xxxi. 2, 3, &c.

shalt thou plant pleasant plants] R.V. marg. gives **thou plantest plantings of Adonis**. The supposed reference is to the Adonis-gardens mentioned by Greek writers (see Plato, *Phaedrus* 276). They were "pots of quickly withering flowers which the ancients used to set at their doors or in the courts of temples." It cannot be denied that such an allusion furnishes the most striking image conceivable of the futility of all human projects which (like the Syro-Ephraimitish alliance) are not grounded in the eternal moral purpose of Jehovah. The question is whether it is a fair interpretation of the text. Now, there are a number of scattered proofs, slight but very interesting, that the Syrian deity known to the Greeks as Adonis, actually bore the name here rendered "pleasantness" (*Na'āmān*). It has been suggested, e.g. that the *anemone*, the flower sacred to Adonis, derives its name from this title of the god; and in Arabic the red anemone is called by a name which is explained to mean "wounds of Adonis." For other arguments see Cheyne's *Comm.* and the references there. Adonis being a Syrian deity, his worship in Israel was a necessary consequence of the alliance with Damascus. His worship was practised chiefly by women, Ez. viii. 14. The rendering may at least be accepted as giving significance to a metaphor which is otherwise somewhat colourless.

And shalt set it *with* strange slips:
 In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, 11
 And in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to
 flourish:
But the harvest *shall be* a heap in the day of grief
 and of desperate sorrow.

Woe to the multitude of many people, 12
Which make a noise like the noise of the seas;
 And to the rushing of nations,
That make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters.

set it with strange slips] or, *plant it with vine-branches of a strange (god)*; see Num. xiii. 23; Nah. ii. 2.

11. The verse reads: **In the day when thou plantest thou makest it to grow, and in the morning when thou sowest thou makest it to blossom, (but) the harvest disappears in a day of sickness and incurable sorrow.** "However successful your enterprise may seem in its early stages, it is doomed to failure." For "makest it to grow" we may render with R.V. "hedgest it in." The words "plant" and "seed" must be construed alike, both are taken above as infinitives. The word for "disappears" means "heap" in Ex. xv. 8; Ps. xxxiii. 7, lxxviii. 13 and so A.V. here. But here it is better taken as a verb; R.V. rightly "fleeth away."

CH. XVII. 12—14. THE SUDDEN ANNIHILATION OF THE ASSYRIANS.

These verses are regarded by some critics as the continuation of ch. xvii. 1—11, by others as the introduction to ch. xviii. Since the reference here is undoubtedly to the Assyrians, the first view has nothing to commend it, the transition being too sudden and abrupt. The second view, in spite of identity of subject and a certain similarity in form with ch. xviii., is also improbable because of the well-marked conclusion in v. 14 and the completeness of ch. xviii. in itself. It is better, therefore, to treat the passage as a short independent oracle springing from the same historical situation as the following chapter.

12. 'Isaiah on his "watch-tower" hears, and we seem to hear with him, the ocean-like roar of the advancing Assyrian hosts' (Cheyne). Whether the invaders are already in the land, or are present only to the imagination of the prophet, it is impossible to determine. The first half of the verse should be rendered: **Ah, the roar of many peoples, that roar like the roaring of seas.** The "many peoples" are the varied subject nationalities that furnished contingents to the Assyrian army. The comparison of such tumultuous masses of men to the noise of waters is frequent in the O.T.: cf. ch. v. 30, viii. 7; Jer. vi. 23, xli. 7f.; Ps. lxxv. 7.

- 13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters :
 But *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off,
 And shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains
 before the wind,
 And like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
- 14 And behold at eveningtide trouble ;
 And before the morning he *is* not.
 This *is* the portion of them that spoil us,
 And the lot of them that rob us.

13. The Assyrians shall perish at the rebuke of Jehovah. The first clause of the verse is almost identical with the last words of v. 12, and is wanting in the Peshito and a few Hebr. MSS. It may have arisen through dittography, although some think the repetition is rhetorically effective, contrasting the long-drawn-out terror of the invasion with the sharp and sudden visitation described in what follows.

[*but God shall rebuke them*] Better: **but he** (Jehovah) **rebuketh it** (the tumult of nations). The following verbs should also be rendered as presents and in the singular number: **it fleeth...is chased**. The "rebuke" of Jehovah is His voice of thunder (Ps. civ. 7).

[*chaff of the mountains*] Threshing-floors were chosen by preference on elevated situations, free to the wind, which carried away the stubble without any artificial winnowing process.

[*a rolling thing*] R.V. **the whirling dust**, as in Ps. lxxxiii. 13. The translation "stubble," however, is supported by the analogy of Aramaic and Arabic words.

For the figure, comp. ch. xxix. 5; Ps. i. 4, xxxv. 5, &c.

14. The destruction of the Assyrian shall be accomplished between evening and daybreak. The expression denotes a very short space of time, as in Ps. xxx. 5; Job xxvii. 19; but the destruction of Sennacherib's army took place literally in the night (ch. xxxvii. 36).

[*And behold...he is not*] Render: **At eventime, behold terror! before morning, it** (the tumult) **is gone!**

[*them that spoil us, &c.*] the Assyrians; cf. ch. x. 6, 13.

CH. XVIII. A PROPHETIC CHARGE TO THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS.

The theme of this striking prophecy is, like that of the preceding, the impending overthrow of the Assyrian power; its peculiar dramatic form is explained by the occasion which suggested it. This appears to have been the arrival in Jerusalem of an embassy from the Ethiopian monarch, probably Taharqa (Tirhakah), whose reign is supposed to have begun about the same time as that of Sennacherib (705). The object of the embassy must have been either to form an alliance with Hezekiah against Assyria, or to encourage him in resistance by renewed assurances of support. The only period at which such an incident is historically probable is that which preceded the final rupture between

Woe to the land shadowing with wings,

18

Judah and Assyria (c. 702). A date much earlier is inconsistent with ch. xx., where (in 711) Isaiah predicts an Assyrian conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia. On the other hand the tone of the prophecy seems to point to an early stage of the rebellion. There is no trace of the fierce indignation with which the *Egyptian* alliance is denounced in ch. xxviii. — xxxi.; the prophet does not seem as yet to have anticipated that the proposals of Tirhakah would be seriously entertained. Hence we may suppose that his reply to the envoys was intended as a guide to the policy of the king and his advisers. (See further General Introd., pp. xvi f.) In that reply Isaiah exhibits a fine combination of the character of the statesman with that of the man of faith, of the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re*. While the language breathes the courtly urbanity and respect due to distinguished strangers from a far country, we can easily read between the lines a firm rejection of their overtures. Jehovah, he says in effect, will crush the Assyrian in His own time without human help; and that signal judgment will be a demonstration to Ethiopia and all the world of His supreme Godhead.

The prophecy contains two equal strophes and an epilogue:

i. vv. 1—3. The prophet's message to Ethiopia, prefaced by an imaginative description of the mysterious land and its inhabitants. The message itself is contained in v. 3, and is an invitation to all nations of the earth to be spectators of Jehovah's crowning act of retribution on Assyria.

ii. vv. 4—6. The divine revelation on which this assurance is based. For it is as an inspired prophet that Isaiah thus ventures to guide the policy of his country at this critical juncture. The meaning of the figure is that Assyria shall be cut down, just when its gigantic plans of conquest seem to be maturing under the most favourable conditions.

iii. v. 7. The epilogue, describing the effect of this display of Jehovah's power on Ethiopia. Other embassies, of a far different character, shall then come from the remote land to do homage to the name of Jehovah at Mount Zion.

1—3. The charge to the Ethiopian envoys, along with a poetic description of the land and people. The tendency of the ancient world to idealise the Ethiopians is familiar to students of classical literature. To the Greeks they were the "blameless Ethiopians" (Homer), "the tallest and handsomest of all men" (Herodotus). Isaiah would seem to have been struck by the fine physique of the ambassadors, and perhaps it was their narrative that furnished his vivid imagination with the picturesque details crowded into these three verses.

1. The word rendered *woe* is here neither a 'cry of pity' nor (as usually in Isaiah) of indignation. It is simply a particle of salutation (*heus*) as in ch. lv. 1; Zech. ii. 6, 7 (10, 11 Heb.). Render: **Ha, the land, &c.**

the land shadowing with wings] a much disputed phrase. The most probable sense is that followed by R.V., **the land of the rustling of wings**. The Hebr. noun for "rustling" (*ṣēlāṣāl* or *ṣilṣal*) means a kind of "locust" (Deut. xxviii. 42), a "harpoon" (Job xli. 7, A.V. "fish-spears"),

Which *is* beyond the rivers of Ethiopia :

- 2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea,
Even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, *saying*,
Go, ye swift messengers,
To a nation scattered and peeled,
To a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ;

and a very similar form means "cymbals" (Ps. cl. 5). The common root-idea is that of "clanging" or "jingling"; and if the above translation be correct the allusion is to the booming swarms of insects which abound in the Nile-lands. There may even be a special allusion to the dreaded Tsetse-fly, whose name among the Gallas (*çalçalja*) closely resembles the Hebr. word here used. The expression is to be understood literally, not metaphorically of armed hosts. Something might be said for the rendering of the LXX. and Targ. ("land of winged ships") if it did not anticipate v. 2. Others render, "land with the shadow on both sides" (*ἀμφίσκιος*)—a supposed allusion to the fact that between the tropics the shadow falls sometimes on the north and sometimes on the south. But this seems very fanciful.

beyond the rivers of Ethiopia] The phrase is repeated in Zeph. iii. 10. Ethiopia (*Kush*) is used in the Bible somewhat vaguely of the region south of Syene (Assouan), at the first cataract of the Nile (Ezek. xxix. 10), corresponding generally to the modern Soudân ("land of the Blacks"). The empire of Tirhakah, which Isaiah has particularly in view, had its seat at Napata on the great westward bend of the Nile between Dongola and Berber. Hence it is not inappropriately described as lying "beyond" the rivers of Kush, i.e. the Nile itself and its numerous affluents (the Atbara, the Blue Nile, &c.).

2. The *ambassadors* are those who have arrived in Jerusalem. They had descended the Nile (here called *the sea*, as in ch. xix. 5; Nah. iii. 8) in *vessels of bulrushes* (R.V. **papyrus**). These light skiffs, constructed for one or two passengers, and capable of being carried where the river ceased to be navigable, are frequently mentioned by ancient writers (cf. Pliny XIII. 11 "ex ipso quidem papyro navigia texunt," and other authorities cited by Gesenius). Their great speed is referred to in Job ix. 26 ("ships of reed").

Go, ye swift messengers] Isaiah's charge to the ambassadors begins here; they are to return to their own country with this answer. (The "saying" of A.V. and R.V. is quite misleading.)

a nation scattered and peeled] Render as R.V.: **a nation tall and smooth** (lit. "drawn-out and polished"). The latter epithet probably denotes the bronze-like appearance of the skin of the Ethiopians; some, however, take it in the general sense of "beautiful" (*μέγιστοι καὶ κάλλιστοι*). The Nubians of the Soudân are still a remarkably tall and handsome race.

terrible from their beginning hitherto] Better: **dreaded near and far**. Lit., perhaps, "from where it is and onward," cf. 1 Sam. x. 3, xx. 22, 37. The temporal sense, however, is possible (1 Sam. xviii. 9), although less natural here.

A nation meted out and trodden down,
 Whose land the rivers have spoiled.
 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the ³
 earth,
 See ye, when *he* lifteth up an ensign *on* the mountains;
 And when *he* bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.
 For so the LORD said unto me,
 I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling ⁴
 place
 Like a clear heat upon herbs,
 And like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

meted out and trodden down] Render: **strong and victorious** (lit. "of strength and treading down"). The Hebr. for "strength" presents some difficulty. If read as pointed (*qav-qav*) it looks like a repetition of the word for "measuring-line" (*qav*); and this is the origin of the "meting out" of E.V. ("people of line-line"). But this sense has little probability; and the translation "strength" is warranted by the analogy of the cognate Arabic noun *quvva*. It is perhaps better to read it as a reduplicated form (*qavqav*), although the word occurs nowhere else. Note that R.V. rightly takes both nouns in an active sense.

have spoiled] The word is found only here and is of uncertain meaning. A more likely translation is "intersect" or (as R.V.) **divide**.

3. This verse gives the message which the ambassadors are to carry home to their countrymen, although it concerns all the world as much as the Ethiopians.

Render: **when a signal is lifted up...when a trumpet is blown**. Cf. ch. xiii. 2. Since the whole process is supernatural it is idle to enquire what the "signal" and "trumpet" signify. The verse is simply a summons to be prepared for the moment of Jehovah's decisive intervention.

4—6. The purpose of Jehovah, as disclosed to Isaiah by special revelation. The opening words point back to a definite time when this illumination came to him,—whether in a moment of ecstasy or not it is impossible to say.

4. *I will take...consider*] Better: **I will quietly look on**, the first verb being subordinate to the second.

like a clear heat upon herbs] Translate as R.V.: **like clear heat in** (or, along with) **sunshine**. The overpowering heat of the atmosphere in the height of summer seems something superadded to the effect of the sun's rays.

like a cloud of dew] The Hebr. word for "dew" means really a fine drizzling mist: what is meant is possibly the stationary *cirrus*-cloud in the upper air, which is called a 'mist-cloud,' in distinction from the rain-cloud near the earth (so Duhm).

Both expressions are rightly construed as comparisons. The temporal construction suggested by R.V. marg. ("when there is, &c.") is grammatically possible in the first case, but hardly in the second. The

- 5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect,
And the sour grape is ripening in the flower,
He shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks,
And take away *and* cut down the branches.
- 6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the
mountains,
And to the beasts of the earth :
And the fowls shall summer upon them,
And all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon
them.
- 7 In that time shall the present be brought unto the
LORD of hosts
Of a people scattered and peeled,
And from a people terrible from their beginning
hitherto ;
A nation meted out and trodden under foot,

points of comparison are apparently two: (1) the motionless stillness of the noon-tide heat and the fleecy cloud are an emblem of Jehovah's quiescence. (2) As these natural phenomena hasten the ripening of the fruit, so all providential agencies appear to further and mature the schemes of Assyria. But the development is suddenly arrested just before its fruition.

5. Assyria is here compared to a vine, ripening its grapes under the favourable influences indicated in v. 4. The word for *harvest* does not strictly denote "vintage" (see on ch. xvi. 9) ; either the more general term is employed for the particular, or the vine is conceived as cut down at that stage of its growth which coincides with the (wheat-)harvest.

Continue as in R.V., **when the blossom is over and the flower becometh a ripening grape, &c.**

take away and cut down] Rather (to avoid a *hysteron-proteron*) **hew away**, the first verb having merely adverbial force.

6. The figure is now abandoned; instead of the "sprigs and branches" of the vine, we have the dead bodies of the Assyrian soldiers left as carrion for unclean beasts and birds. *summer...winter*] a whole year. The idea is amplified, with somewhat gruesome details, in Ezek. xxxix. 11 ff.; cf. also Jer. vii. 33; 1 Sam. xvii. 46; 2 Sam. xxi. 10.

7. Ethiopia shall then pay homage to Jehovah at Mount Zion, the earthly seat of His sovereignty.

For *the present* read **a present**. The word is rare, occurring again only in Ps. lxxviii. 29, lxxvi. 11, in both passages coupled with the same poetic word as is here used for "brought."

of a people] Read **from** as in the next clause. The idea meant to be conveyed by the E.V. might be justified by an appeal to ch. xlv. 14, but it is far more likely that the preposition has been accidentally omitted in the Hebr. text.

Whose land the rivers have spoiled,
To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the
mount Zion.

the place of the name of the LORD] See 1 Ki. viii. 17; Deut. xii. 5, 11.
For other anticipations of the conversion of Ethiopia, cf. ch. xlv. 14;
Zeph. iii. 10; Ps. lxviii. 31, lxxxvii. 4.

CH. XIX. AN ORACLE ON EGYPT.

It is recognised by all commentators that this difficult chapter consists of two dissimilar parts, although it is doubtful whether the second division commences with v. 16 or v. 18. For convenience, we may adopt the arrangement of Delitzsch, who regards vv. 16f. as the connecting link between the two contrasted pictures of Egypt's future; the prospect of judgment in vv. 1—15 and the remoter prospect of conversion and prosperity in vv. 18—25. The prophecy may then be analysed as follows:—

i. vv. 1—15. The judgment on Egypt, conceived as executed by Jehovah in person, who, "riding on a swift cloud," suddenly makes His presence felt in the Nile-valley. In three equal strophes the prophet rapidly sketches the consequences of this visitation on the political, religious, and industrial condition of the country.

(1) vv. 1—4. The first effect is the collapse of the Egyptian religion, which is poetically represented by the trembling of the idols at the approach of the God of Israel (1). The foundation of the national self-confidence being thus dissolved there ensues a state of anarchy and civil war, aggravated by an utter absence of sound political guidance, which is vainly sought by the aid of sorcery and magical arts (2, 3). The issue of this state of things is the establishment of a cruel military despotism (4).

(2) vv. 5—10. A series of physical and social calamities is next described: the drying-up of the Nile (the source of all the material prosperity of Egypt), the failure of agriculture and the paralysis of the other industries for which the land was famous (fishing and weaving).

(3) vv. 11—15. The third strophe depicts the failure of the boasted traditional wisdom of Egypt (11—13), with the result that the infatuated nation reels like a drunkard under its accumulated misfortunes (14, 15).

ii. vv. 16, 17. The Egyptians recognise Jehovah as the author of their calamities, and so great is the moral impression produced that the mere mention of the land of Judah fills their hearts with craven terror. It might seem at first sight that these verses are the continuation of the previous strophe. But the change of style, from poetry to prose, leads us to expect a new departure. And in truth, as Delitzsch has pointed out, the abject fear here spoken of marks the beginning of their conversion to the worship of the true God. Hence the two verses form the natural transition to the description of that spiritual change, which follows in

iii. vv. 18—25. The passage consists of a succession of concrete

predictions indicating the marvellous change which is to take place in the religious attitude of Egypt and its relations to Israel.

(1) *v.* 18. Five Egyptian cities (one of which is named) shall adopt the "language of Canaan." (The exact significance of this perplexing verse must be reserved for discussion in the notes below.)

(2) *vv.* 19—22. The establishment of the worship of Jehovah in the land of Egypt will be symbolised by the erection of an altar in its midst and a pillar on its border; these are also tokens that Jehovah has taken the Egyptians under His protection (19, 20). By manifold experiences of chastisement and deliverance the knowledge of the true God shall be extended and deepened in Egypt, as it had been in Israel in the past (21, 22).

(3) *vv.* 23—25. A third symbol is a "highway" between Egypt and Assyria—a synonym for peaceful intercourse between Israel's powerful neighbours on the East and West (23). Both are admitted to a footing of equality with Israel in the new kingdom of God, and the three states form a 'Triple Alliance' which is a channel of blessing to mankind at large (24, 25).

The first section (*vv.* 1—15), which few critics have refused to recognise as Isaiah's, exhibits an intimate acquaintance with the internal affairs of the Egyptian Empire. But the historical allusions are too vague to enable us to assign a definite date to the prophecy, allowing, indeed, as Dillmann observes, a range of nearly 150 years. The most natural supposition is that Isaiah has in view an Assyrian conquest of Egypt, and that the oracle belongs to a time when delusive expectations of Egyptian support were entertained in Judah. On this assumption, we might find a suitable date for the prediction, (1) about 720, when Sargon defeated the king of Egypt at Raphia, or (2) in 711, when the similar announcement of *ch.* xx. was issued, or (3) about 702, when the Jewish politicians were eagerly courting an alliance with Egypt. Between these dates it seems impossible to make a final choice. In either case the "hard lord" of *v.* 4 would be the Assyrian conqueror, but it is not necessary to suppose that the prophet had any particular king in view. As a matter of fact the subjugation of Egypt was first effected by Esarhaddon in 672, and this would have to be regarded as the historical fulfilment of the prophecy. Some critics, however, abandoning the reference to an Assyrian invasion, have identified the "hard lord" with an Ethiopian sovereign (Pianchi, whose date appears to be much too early, or Tirhakah), others with a Persian conqueror (Cambyses, Xerxes, or even Artaxerxes Ochus), and others with a native despot (?Psammetichus, *c.* 645).

It is difficult to resist the impression that *vv.* 16—25 (whether written by Isaiah or not) form an appendix composed later than the rest of the chapter. The difference in form has already been referred to, and still more remarkable is the change of outlook and general tone. In particular, the promise of a "saviour" in *v.* 20, although not perhaps inconsistent with the threat of a "hard lord" *v.* 4, emphasises the contrast between the two sections in a manner which makes it little likely that the two were written together. Objections to Isaiah's authorship are based partly on the style and language, partly on the sympathetic

The burden of Egypt.

19

Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come *into* Egypt:

And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence,
And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians:

And they shall fight every one against his brother,
and every one against his neighbour;

City against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom.

And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; 3

tone of the references to Egypt (and Assyria), but chiefly on the circumstantial character of the predictions in 18—25. The cogency of the last argument depends greatly on the interpretation given to vv. 18, 19. If this be a specific reference to Jewish Colonies in Egypt and the Jewish Temple in Leontopolis (erected about 160 B.C.), it must be admitted that such minute descriptions of far distant events are not in accordance with Isaiah's ideal anticipations of the future. Hence the tendency of expositors who maintain the genuineness of the passage is to explain away the literal sense of the expressions, and to regard them as conveying a general prophecy of the diffusion of the true religion in Egypt. It may be doubted if the attempt is successful; and on the whole there appears to be a balance of probability in favour of the opinion that the appendix is post-exilic. If it be really the work of Isaiah himself, it is most intelligible in the evening of his life, when his mind was less occupied with current events, and more with the glorious future of the kingdom of God which lay on the horizon of his prophetic vision.

1—4. The dissolution of the Egyptian nationality by the judicial intervention of Jehovah.

1. On the superscription, see on ch. xiii. 1.

rideth upon a swift cloud] The same representation in Ps. xviii. 10, civ. 3. It is based on the ancient conception of the thunder-storm as the emblem of Jehovah's presence.

the idols] the "non-entities" as in ch. ii. 8, &c.

shall be moved at his presence] *shall quake* (ch. vi. 4, vii. 2) before him.

2. Jehovah speaks. The description of anarchy and civil war recalls ch. iii. 5, ix. 18 ff.

I will set... Egyptians] Lit. I will stir up (see ch. ix. 11) Egypt against Egypt—the general expression for civil discord which is explained in the remainder of the verse. *kingdom against kingdom*] LXX. *νομοὶ ἐπὶ νομῶν*—a correct translation drawn from the translator's local knowledge of Egypt. The numerous *nomes* or cantons were but loosely federated, and dissensions and local jealousies were always apt to break out when the central government was paralysed.

3. *the spirit of Egypt shall fail*] lit. be poured out, cf. Jer. xix. 7. "Spirit" is here used of intellectual power, as "heart" in v. 1 denotes courage.

And I will destroy the counsel thereof:

And they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers,
And to them that have familiar spirits, and to the
wizards.

- 4 And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of
a cruel lord;

And a fierce king shall rule over them,
Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

- 5 And the waters shall fail from the sea,
And the river shall be wasted and dried up.

- 6 And they shall turn the rivers far away;
And the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried
up:

I will destroy] or “swallow up,” “annihilate,” but see on ch. iii. 12. In their desperation the Egyptians betake themselves to incantations, a sign in Isaiah’s view of hopeless intellectual embarrassment; ch. viii. 19. The word rendered *charmers* means “mutterers” (of magical spells). For the other expressions employed, see ch. viii. 19.

4. R.V. **And I will give over** (lit. “shut up”) **the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel (“hard”) lord** (in Hebr. plur. of majesty), &c. The words suggest a foreign ruler and are quite applicable to any Assyrian monarch likely to undertake the conquest of Egypt. Esarhaddon in 672 and again Asshurbanipal in 662 ravaged the country as far as Thebes; the Empire was broken up into twenty petty principalities, and all attempts at revolt were sternly suppressed until 645, when Psammeticus, one of the native princes, succeeded in shaking off the Assyrian yoke and uniting Egypt under his own sway.

the Lord, the LORD of hosts] here, as always, in confirmation of a threat. See on i. 24.

5—10. The material and industrial ruin of Egypt.

5. It has been supposed by some that there is a causal connexion between the judgments here threatened and the political calamities described in the first strophe. The loss of a stable and beneficent central administration in Egypt is immediately felt by the peasantry through the neglect of the vast system of artificial irrigation which is essential to the maintenance of the fertility of the soil. It is manifest, however, that the expressions here point to something far more serious than this, viz. a drying up of the Nile by the direct exercise of Jehovah’s power. Cf. Ezek. xxx. 12 and Job xiv. 11 (where the latter part of this verse is reproduced).

the sea] Cf. xviii. 2. “Nili aqua mari similis est” (Pliny). At the time of the annual inundation the Nile has far more the appearance of an inland sea than of a stream; hence it is still called by the Arabs *El-bahr* (the sea).

6. The verse reads: **And the streams shall stink, the canals of Egypt shall become feeble and dry up, &c.** The word for “stink” is

The reeds and flags shall wither.

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the 7
brooks,

And every thing sown by the brooks,

Shall wither, be driven away, and *be no more*.

The fishers also shall mourn,

And all they that cast angle into the brooks shall 8
lament,

And they that spread nets upon the waters shall
languish.

Moreover they that work in fine flax,

And they that weave networks, shall be confounded. 9

And they shall be broken *in* the purposes thereof, 10

All that make sluices *and* ponds for fish.

an anomalous form in Hebr. That rendered in A.V. "defence" is a rare name for Egypt (*Maçôr*, cf. Assy. *Mușur*, Arab. *Mișr*), found also in ch. xxxvii. 25; 2 Kings xix. 24; Mic. vii. 12. "Canals" (A.V. "brooks") is literally "Niles" (cf. vii. 18).

7. *The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks*] Usually rendered as in R.V., "The meadows by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile." The word for "meadows," which does not occur again, is supposed to mean literally "bare place," hardly a suitable designation! A safer translation would be, **Bare places are on the Nile, on the (very) brink of the Nile.** The LXX. has an entirely different text, which might suggest: "Bare is all verdure on the brink of the Nile."

every thing sown] A unique term. Perhaps "seed-field," but note the verb "driven away" which follows. "Seed-field of the Nile" might mean the alluvial deposit produced by the inundation, which is the source of Egypt's fertility.

8. Fishing, one of the staple industries of Egypt, is first mentioned, as that most immediately affected (cf. Ex. vii. 21). The two methods referred to, angling and net-fishing, are both depicted on the monuments. *that cast angle into the brooks*] R.V. Nile.

9. Textile manufactures, linen and cotton, flourished greatly in ancient Egypt. *fine flax*] combed flax (R.V.). For *networks* read **white-stuffs**, probably cotton.

10. Translate as R.V. **And her pillars shall be broken in pieces, all they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul.** The expressions, however, are very obscure, and the sense is doubtful. The word for "pillars" is found in Ps. xi. 3 ("foundations"), but it is disputed whether the capitalists or the labourers are here regarded as the foundations of society. In the second clause A.V. follows Jewish authority in keeping up the reference to fishing (cf. "networks" in the previous verse), but its "sluices and ponds for fish" is altogether wrong. LXX. errs in the opposite direction by dragging in the liquor trade ("manufacturers of strong drink" [*shēkār*] instead of "workers for hire" [*seker*]).

- 11 Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools,
The counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is
become brutish:
How say ye unto Pharaoh, I *am* the son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings?
- 12 Where *are* they? where *are* thy wise *men*?
And let them tell thee now,
And let them know what the LORD of hosts hath
purposed upon Egypt.
- 13 The princes of Zoan are become fools,
The princes of Noph are deceived;
They have also seduced Egypt, *even they that are* the
stay of the tribes thereof.
- 14 The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst
thereof:

11—15. The stultification of Pharaoh's advisers.

11. *Surely...fools*] Mere fools are the princes of Zoan. Zoan (Tanis, between the two most easterly mouths of the Nile), an ancient city (Num. xiii. 22), had played an important part in Egyptian history. Formerly the seat of the Hyksos kings, it had subsequently given its name to two native dynasties (21st and 23rd). Partly because of its proximity to Canaan it is frequently mentioned in the O.T. as representing Egypt. The next clause runs literally: **the wisest counsellors of Pharaoh—stupid counsel** (sc. is theirs)!

how say ye unto Pharaoh...] The wisdom of Egypt was the hereditary possession of the priestly caste to which the early dynasties belonged. The counsellors are here introduced boasting of the purity of their descent from these kings and sages of the olden time. Read (in both cases) **a son**.

12. The Pharaoh is now addressed in turn. **Where are they, pray, thy wise men?** In face of this problem they are nowhere; they cannot "know," far less "tell," the purpose of Jehovah towards Egypt.

13. *are become fools*] Better **are befooled**—"stultified." *Noph* is Memphis, the capital of Lower Egypt, and an ancient seat of Egyptian religion and learning. An older form of the Hebrew name is apparently *Moph* (Hos. ix. 6); both forms are perhaps contracted from *Mnoph* (hieroglyphic *Mennofer*). The city was situated in the southern corner of the Delta, near Cairo, which was largely built from its ruins.

even they that are *the stay of the tribes thereof*] Render: **the corner-stone of her tribes**, i.e. her ruling caste. For the metaphor, cf. Jud. xx. 2; 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Zech. x. 4. The "tribes" may be either the castes or the nomes (cantons).

14. Their intellectual confusion is caused by "a spirit" from Jehovah (but not personified as in 1 Kings xxii. 21 f.). *a perverse spirit*] Better **a spirit of perverseness** (R.V.). Cf. "spirit of deep slumber," ch. xxix. 10.

And they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof,

As a drunken *man* staggereth in his vomit.

Neither shall there be *any* work for Egypt, 15

Which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: 16

And it shall be afraid and fear

Because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts,

Which he shaketh over it.

And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, 17

Every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself,

Because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts,

Which he hath determined against it.

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt 18
Speak the language of Canaan,

err...staggereth] The same verb should be used in both places—"wander" or "stray." The strong figure has a parallel in ch. xxviii.

7. Cf. Job xii. 25.

15. No concerted action is possible, and every proposal that is brought forward falls to the ground.

head and tail, palm-branch and rush, exactly as in ch. ix. 14.

16, 17. The terror of Jehovah on the Egyptians. There is an allusion to the effect of the plagues in the time of the Exodus. See Ex. x. 7, xi. 3, xii. 33, 36. Then, as in this prophecy, the people of God became an object of fear to their enemies, through the strokes of Jehovah's hand.

16. *like unto women*] timid and faint-hearted (Nah. iii. 13).

be afraid] Better, *tremble*, as R.V. *the shaking* (or "swinging") *of the hand...which he shaketh*] i.e. the repeated blows with which he smites them, cf. xxx. 32, x. 32, xi. 15.

17. By association of ideas the fear of Jehovah becomes fear of the land which is His dwelling-place. The verse is intelligible only in this connexion.

every one that maketh...himself] Either "every (Egyptian) to whom one mentions it, shall fear," or "whenever any one mentions it to him (Egypt) he shall fear."

the counsel of the LORD of hosts] see v. 11.

18. The verse may mean either (1) that an indefinite, but small, number of Egyptian cities shall be converted to the worship of Jehovah and adopt Hebrew as at least their sacred language; or (2) that at a certain epoch there shall be five (and no more) Jewish colonies in Egypt maintaining their national language and religion. On the former view

And swear to the LORD of hosts :
One shall be called, The city of destruction.

"five" is a round number (as in ch. xxx. 17; Gen. xliii. 34; Lev. xxvi. 8; 1 Sam. xvii. 40, xxi. 3; 2 Ki. vii. 13), and the verse is a prophecy of the first beginnings of the conversion of Egypt—a "day of small things." This interpretation, although grammatically defensible, is not natural. No parallel can be found in Isaiah's writings to the anticipation of a gradual dissemination of the true religion by sporadic conversions. He always treats the nations as units, and it is very questionable if the idea of a religious schism within the Egyptian nationality could have presented itself to him or his contemporaries as a desirable thing, or a realisation of the Messianic hope. If we adopt the second view the prophecy must have been written at a time when the prospect of Hebrew-speaking Jewish communes in Egypt was a natural expression of the anticipation that the influence of the Jewish religion would extend to that country. This was not the case at the very late date maintained by some critics (B.C. 160). By that time the Egyptian Jews had so completely abandoned their native tongue that a Greek translation of the Scriptures had become necessary for their use. This part of the prophecy is more intelligible at a considerably earlier period, before the universal solvent of the Greek language had begun to leaven the varied nationalities of the old world.—It is of course impossible to identify the "five cities." Hitzig has attempted it by the help of Jer. xlv. 1, adding to the three towns there mentioned, Heliopolis and Leontopolis (see below).

one shall be called, The city of destruction] The exegesis of this clause is complicated by a diversity of text. (α) The received text has *ʿir haḥeres*, which in Hebrew can only mean "the city of Destruction." The insurmountable objection to this reading is that it is inconsistent with the favourable general sense of the verse; for the translation "city of [the] destruction of idolatry, &c." is quite unwarranted. Some, however, explain the word by *haris*, an Arabic epithet of the lion, rendering, "city of the Lion," i.e. Leontopolis, where the Jewish Temple was built. This might be intelligible as a *correction* of the reading to be next mentioned; hardly as an independent text. Moreover, the Greek translator of Isaiah knew nothing of it, but followed an entirely different reading (γ below). (β) Another reading, found in some Hebrew MSS. and followed by the Vulg., is *ʿir haḥeres*, "city of the Sun," i.e. Heliopolis. This gives a good sense. Heliopolis, the biblical *On* (Gen. xli. 50, &c.), might be especially mentioned because of its great importance in the religion of Egypt, as it is (under the name "house of the Sun") in Jer. xliii. 13. (γ) The LXX. reads "city of Righteousness" (*ʿir haḥsedeq*). This reading, in itself the least probable of the three, is defended by some commentators as most in accordance with Isaiah's use of names as descriptive of the essential quality of the objects (cf. i. 26, iv. 3, vii. 14, ix. 6). So here "city of righteousness" is regarded not as the proper name of any one city, but an epithet applicable to any of the five. On the whole, the suggestion of Cheyne seems as plausible as any, that the original form was *heres*, and the reference was to Heliopolis;

In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in 19
the midst of the land of Egypt,
And a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.
And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the 20
LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt:

that this was altered by the Egyptian Jews to *cedeq* and by those of Palestine to *heres* (destruction), the motive in both cases being to establish a reference (in the first case favourable, in the second unfavourable) to the temple at Leontopolis. The latter variant, however, might be due to accident.

[The Jewish Temple in Egypt was erected about 160 with the sanction of Ptolemy Philometor and his consort by Onias IV., the legitimate heir of the high-priesthood at Jerusalem. (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII. 3, 1 f.; *Bell. Jud.* VII. 10, 2 f.) It was a brilliant conception on the part of the priest, but was probably not dictated by very lofty motives. Having been ousted from his rights by the intrigues of the apostate party in Judæa, he sought by this means to retain the state and emoluments of a great ecclesiastical dignitary. His enterprise cannot have been regarded with friendly eyes by the patriotic party in Jerusalem, and afterwards when the new Temple began to divert the stream of Jewish liberality from Jerusalem, their antipathy increased. The temple was built, after the model of that at Jerusalem, on the ruins of an Egyptian temple of the lion-headed goddess Bast (hence the name Leontopolis) in the Heliopolitan nome.]

19. It was to this verse, according to Josephus (and not to v. 18), that Onias appealed in support of the legitimacy of his project. The statement is perfectly intelligible; it had never occurred to any one to think of Leontopolis in connexion with v. 18; on the other hand, the promise of v. 19 was warrant enough.

an altar to the LORD] evidently intended for sacrificial offerings, not a mere memorial (see v. 21). The writer thus transcends the limits of the Mosaic legislation, which recognised but one altar of Jehovah. Some explain the prediction in a symbolical sense, of the spiritual worship of Jehovah maintained by the Jews and their proselytes. But this is hardly justifiable.

a pillar at the border thereof] The word *maṣṣēbā* usually denotes the sacred stones which stood by the idolatrous shrines of Canaan and whose destruction is enjoined in the Law (Deut. xvi. 22; Ex. xxiii. 24, &c.). From its use here it has been inferred that the prophecy dates from a time anterior to the promulgation of the Deuteronomic Code in the reign of Josiah. But it is doubtful if even in the age of Isaiah the *maṣṣēbā* in this sense could have had positive value as an adjunct of Jehovah's worship. The word is probably used in the general sense of a memorial pillar, and may have been suggested by the huge monoliths which were so characteristic of Egyptian civilisation. This one stands on the frontier of Egypt, as a sign to every one entering the country that Jehovah is known there.

20. *for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts*] i.e. a

- For they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors,
 And he shall send them a saviour, and a great one,
 and he shall deliver them.
- 21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt,
 And the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day,
 And shall do sacrifice and oblation;
 Yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform *it*.
- 22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: *he* shall smite and heal *it*.
 And they shall return *even* to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.
- 23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria,

reminder that He has a people in Egypt, and that by their presence the land is consecrated to Him.

The process of conversion in this and the following verses is finely conceived. First, the name of Jehovah is made known by the religious observances of the Jewish colonists and proselytes; then, in a time of trouble, the Egyptians turn to Him instead of to their false gods, and learn to know Him through His answer to their prayers (20, 21); finally this experience of Jehovah is deepened and purified by a discipline similar to that to which Israel was subjected in the time of the Judges (22).

the oppressors] Omit the art.; the reference is quite general.

a saviour] See Jud. iii. 9, 15; 2 Kings xiii. 5.

a great one] Better: **a champion**. A special allusion to Ptolemy Soter, or to the Jewish generals who served under Ptolemy Philometor is not called for.

21. *shall be known*] Rather: **shall make himself known**, as R.V. marg.

sacrifice and oblation] animal and vegetable offerings, see on i. 11, 13.

22. *he shall smite and heal it*] lit. "with a smiting and a healing," i.e. He will smite only in order to heal (Hos. vi. 1). *be intreated*] hear their supplications (*Niph. tolerativum*).

23—25. The incorporation of Egypt and Assyria in the kingdom of God. On the hypothesis that the prophecy is post-exilic "Assyria" will here denote the power to whom the reversion of the ancient Assyrian Empire had fallen. See on ch. xi. 11.

23. *a highway*] leading of course through Palestine. The ancient enmity between the two empires is laid aside in consequence of their common acceptance of the religion of Jehovah. **Egypt shall serve (Jehovah) with Assyria.**

And the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the
Egyptian into Assyria,
And the Egyptians shall serve *with* the Assyrians.
In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and ²⁴
with Assyria,
Even a blessing in the midst of the land:
Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, ²⁵
Blessed *be* Egypt my people,
And Assyria the work of my hands,
And Israel mine inheritance.

24. *shall Israel be the third*—member of the Messianic League. For *land* read *earth* as R.V.

25. *whom the LORD of hosts shall bless*] R.V. for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed him (Israel). A better sense than either is given by the LXX. "(the earth;) which Jehovah...hath blessed." But the masculine suffix is opposed to this.

my people and *the work of my hands* are titles elsewhere confined to Israel, but here accorded to Egypt and Assyria, the still dearer epithet *mine inheritance* being reserved for Israel,—as it were the ancestral estate of the one true God.

CH. XX. AN ASSYRIAN CONQUEST OF EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA PREDICTED.

The chapter is unique amongst Isaiah's discourses as giving the interpretation of a very remarkable symbolic action performed by the prophet at the command of Jehovah. For three years he went about in the garb of a beggar or captive, an object of astonishment and derision to the respectable inhabitants of Jerusalem. At the end of that time he published this explanation of his strange conduct. It was a public protest against the false hopes then entertained of a speedy deliverance from the Assyrian tyranny through the help of Egypt and Ethiopia (*v.* 6).

The date of the prophecy is assured. The expedition mentioned in *v.* 1 took place in 711, and is minutely related in two of Sargon's own inscriptions (see Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, Vol. II., pp. 89 ff. [Engl. Trans.]). At that time Ashdod was the focus of disaffection in Palestine towards the Assyrian government. Its king, Azuri, had withheld his tribute and joined with the princes of the neighbouring states (Judah included) in an appeal to Egypt for succour. For this he was deposed by Sargon, his brother Akhimit being set up in his place; but Akhimit was in turn removed by the Ashdodites, who chose one Yaman as their leader. Sargon then sent his commander-in-chief against Ashdod; the city was taken and plundered and its inhabitants led into captivity. Yaman had fled to the king of Meluhha, but was delivered up to the Assyrian king. Sargon's forces seem to have been too much occupied

- 20 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against
 2 Ashdod, and took it; at the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying,

Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins,
 And put off thy shoe from thy foot.

- 3 And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And the LORD said,

Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot
 Three years *for* a sign and wonder

elsewhere to allow the work of chastisement to be carried further, and so for the time Judah escaped the penalty of its meditated revolt.

The chapter is important as shewing that at this date Isaiah still looked forward to a great extension of the Assyrian conquests.

1, 2. A narrative introduction.

1. *Tartan*] In Assyrian *Turtanu*, the official title of the "chief of the staff." Cf. 2 Kings xviii. 17.

Sargon] (Assyr. *Sarrukin*) the only mention of this now familiar name in the O.T. For long it was supposed to be a second name of either Shalmaneser or Sennacherib (see Tobit i. 15), but the conjecture of a few scholars that he would prove to be an intermediate king has been amply verified by the progress of Assyriology; and Sargon is now one of the best known, as he was one of the most vigorous, of Assyrian monarchs. He reigned from 722—705.

2. This verse is an explanatory parenthesis. The command here mentioned must have been given three years before the oracle of vv. 3 ff.; hence the expression "at that time" must be understood in a loose sense and for *spake* we must render "had spoken."

sackcloth] the rough garment of hair or coarse linen worn by mourners in lieu of the customary upper garment; also by prophets (2 Ki. i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4). It is rather surprising to find that Isaiah wore this distinctive badge of his profession. He is directed to "ungird" (and lay aside) this and walk "naked," i.e. in his under-garment (the *kuttōneth*), cf. 1 Sam. xix. 24; John xxi. 7. The action was expressive of the deepest degradation, and involved no small sacrifice for a man of Isaiah's position. But that he actually performed it cannot reasonably be questioned. Cf. Mic. i. 8.

3, resuming v. 1, gives the interpretation of the symbol.

my servant Isaiah] Isaiah is Jehovah's "servant" as a prophet. Cf. Am. iii. 7; Num. xii. 7.

sign and wonder] see ch. viii. 18. By the accents the words "three years" are attached to this clause in order to convey the sense "a three-years' sign," meaning "a sign of an event which is to happen after three

Upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;
 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians 4
 prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives,
 Young and old, naked and barefoot,
 Even with *their* buttocks uncovered,
 To the shame of Egypt.
 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia 5
 their expectation,
 And of Egypt their glory.
 And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, 6
 Behold, such *is* our expectation,
 Whither we flee for help
 To be delivered from the king of Assyria:
 And how shall we escape?

years." But this is very unnatural, and was evidently suggested by a desire to avoid the notion that the action was kept up for so long a time.

upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia] Ethiopia was at this time the paramount influence in the Nile-valley, Upper Egypt being completely under its sway, while Lower Egypt was divided amongst a number of petty princes. The Sab'é, or Sib'i (?Sevé), whom Sargon defeated in 720 is usually identified with the Ethiopian Sabako. Winckler, however, doubts this, and takes Sab'é to have been one of the small kings of the Delta. (See also Cheyne's Note in 2nd Ed. of Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*, p. 428.) "Upon" may be either **against** or **concerning**.

4. The apodosis. *lead away]* as in 1 Sam. xxx. 2.

the Egyptians prisoners...captives] Better as R.V. **the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Ethiopia**. The two words for exile are both abstracts used in a concrete sense; the corresponding verbs denote, the one the act of making captive, the other the act of going into exile (lit. leaving the land bare).

to the shame] The word means "nakedness," and the construction is difficult.

5, 6. The effect which the sight of these miserable gangs of captives will produce on the inhabitants of Palestine. This is the real motive of the prophecy. Hezekiah probably took the warning.

they shall be afraid] R.V. better: **dismayed**. The subject is indefinite—"men."

6. *this isle]* strictly: **this coastland** (as R.V.). The expression is most accurately descriptive of the Philistine country; but must include Judah. Isaiah did not go three years naked and barefoot for the sake of the Philistines. It no doubt embraces the territory of all the states concerned in the conspiracy—"this region."

expectation here and v. 5 is "object of expectation." *we* has a position of great emphasis in the original.

CH. XXI. ORACLES ON BABYLON, EDMON AND ARABIA.

These three short and difficult oracles form together one of the most singular passages in prophecy. Common to all three are (*a*) the obscure oracular utterance, in striking contrast to the terse lucidity of Isaiah's style, (*b*) the strongly-marked visionary element in the writer's experience, and (*c*) a certain readiness of sympathy with the foreign nations concerned in the predictions. These features indicate, if not identity of authorship, at least a peculiar type of prophetic inspiration, to which no complete parallel is found in the acknowledged writings of Isaiah. It is true that expressions characteristic of Isaiah occur in *vv.* 1—10, but they are hardly sufficient to remove the impression that the individuality of the writer is distinct from that of Isaiah. In the rest of the chapter the linguistic evidence is decidedly adverse to Isaiah's authorship.

THE ORACLE ON BABEL. *vv.* 1—10.

Like whirlwinds in the desert, the prophet has seen in a "hard vision" the stormy and impetuous advance of the Persian hosts against Babylon, *vv.* 1, 2.

Unnerved and appalled by what he has seen, his mind is filled with gloom and foreboding; the immediate prospect of carnage and destruction obscures for the moment the brighter hopes beyond, of deliverance for Israel, *vv.* 3, 4.

Another scene is briefly depicted; a Babylonian carousal within the walls, suddenly interrupted by the call to arms, *v.* 5.

The prophet then describes the mysterious inward process by which the truth had been communicated to him. In spirit he had stationed "the watchman" (his prophetic consciousness) to scan the horizon for some indication of the coming catastrophe. After long waiting "the watchman" describes the appointed sign—a train of riders—and forthwith proclaims its purport, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," &c., *vv.* 6—9.

The oracle closes with an apostrophe to the writer's own people announcing that what he has seen is the sure word of Jehovah, *v.* 10.

The question of authorship has to be settled mainly on historical grounds, and we have to consider in the first place, what conquest of Babylon is here referred to? (1) According to an attractive theory propounded by George Smith (the Assyriologist) and elaborated by Kleinert, the reference is to one of the sieges of Babylon which took place in Isaiah's lifetime, most probably that by Sargon in 710. The king of Babylon at that time was Merodach-baladan (see General Introd., p. xvi, and below on ch. xxxix.), whose friendly intercourse with Hezekiah is thought to account for Isaiah's interest in the struggle, as well as for the aversion with which he seems to contemplate the triumph of Assyria (*vv.* 3—5). (2) The majority of critics hold that the prophecy belongs to the last decade of the exile and relates to the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 538 (see on ch. xiii. f.). This is certainly the more obvious theory, and the exegetical difficulties which have been

The burden of the desert of the sea.
 As whirlwinds in the south pass through;
 So it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.
 A grievous vision is declared unto me;
 The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the
 spoiler spoileth.

urged against it seem all to be capable of a satisfactory solution. The "tone of depression" manifested in vv. 3, 4 belongs to the subjectivity of the writer, and merely proves that he is distinct from the author of ch. xiii. f.; it has no parallel in Isaiah's descriptions of the fate of Judah's allies. The mention of "Elam" and "Media" (v. 2) as the conquering foe is not incompatible with Isaiah's authorship (see xxii. 6), but is most naturally explained of the army of Cyrus. The impression that the author lived at a distance from Babylon is possibly correct (see on v. 1); but there may have been inspired seers in Palestine during the time of the Exile. On the other hand, v. 10 and the latter part of v. 2 seem clearly to imply that Babylon herself, and not her conqueror, is the cruel tyrant under whom the Jews and other nations are languishing.

1, 2. The "hard vision" of Babylon's fate.

1. *The burden of the desert of the sea*] Perhaps, **The oracle, "Desert of the Sea."** The first of a series of enigmatic headings, all but peculiar to this section of the book: xxi. 11, 13, xxii. 1 (cf. xxx. 6). In the majority of cases they are to be explained as catchwords, taken from the body of the oracle (in this instance the fourth word of the original, "desert"). Similarly David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is entitled the song of "the bow," 2 Sam. i. 18, cf. v. 22. The words "of the sea" are wanting in the LXX. Some render "deserts" (reading *midbar'im* for *midbar-yam*). Others, again, regard the fuller form as an emblematic designation of Babylon or Babylonia: the country that was once a sea (*θάλασσα* Herod. i. 184) and shall be so again.

in the south] Lit. "in the Negeb," the dry pastoral region in the south of Judah and beyond. The inference that the prophecy was written in Palestine is plausible, but not inevitable, since the word is used of the southern direction. For *pass through*, render **sweeping along**.

it (the undefined danger) *cometh from the desert*] probably the flat region S.E. of Babylon, between it and Elam. *a terrible land*] cf. xxx. 6; Deut. i. 19, viii. 15, &c.

2. *A grievous* (lit. "hard") *vision is declared unto me*]—by the "watchman," v. 6. "Hard" may mean either "calamitous" (1 Ki. xiv. 6) or "difficult," "hard of interpretation" (John vi. 60).

the treacherous dealer...spoileth] Cf. ch. xxiv. 16. It is difficult to decide whether this is a description of the besieging foe or of the conduct of the Babylonians towards their captives. The former view might be defended by xxxiii. 1 (assuming that the Assyrians are there alluded to) but it requires us to substitute for "treacherous dealer,"

- Go up, O Elam : besiege, O Media ;
 All the sighing thereof have I made to cease.
 3 Therefore are my loins filled *with* pain :
 Pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a
 woman that travaileth :
 I was bowed down at the hearing *of it* ;
 I was dismayed at the seeing *of it*.
 4 My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me :
 The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear
 unto me.
 5 Prepare the table, watch *in* the watchtower, eat, drink :
 Arise, ye princes, *and* anoint the shield.
 6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me,

“robber,” which is not the exact sense of the word. The other alternative is supported by the last clause of this verse (see below).

Elam...Media] The dominions of Cyrus. The former lay east of the Tigris and north of the Persian Gulf; Media was the mountainous district adjoining it on the north. Cyrus, according to the Babylonian records, was originally king of Anzan, in the north of Elam; in 549 he conquered Media, uniting the two in one kingdom. The name “Persia” never occurs in pre-exilic books.

all the sighing thereof] The misery produced by her (Babylon’s) ruthless oppressions. The verb shews that Jehovah is the speaker.

3, 4. The agitation and terror of the prophet.

3. *are my loins filled with pain*] Nah. ii. 10.

I was bowed down at the hearing...] or, as R.V. **I am pained so that I cannot hear**, &c. Similar metaphorical descriptions of mental anguish are frequent.

4. *My heart panted*] lit. **strayeth**; as we should say “my reason reels.” “Heart,” as often, is used of the intellect. *fearfulness*] R.V. **horror**.

the night of my pleasure] i.e. “my pleasant evening hours,” favourable for visionary communications and therefore dear to a prophet. (Job iv. 13).

hath he turned] Better: “is turned”; or “it (the vision) turns.”

fear] **trembling** (as R.V.).

5. The prophet contrasts his own lonely vigils with the careless security of the Babylonian revellers (cf. Dan. v. ; Jer. li. 39; Is. xiv. 11).

Prepare the table, &c.] Render as in R.V. **They prepare the table, they set the watch** (the only measure of precaution adopted by the revellers), **they eat, they drink**.

arise, ye princes] The banquet breaks up in confusion, for the foe is at the gates.

anoint the shield] Shields were oiled (2 Sam. i. 21), probably to make the blows glide off them.

6—9. Hitherto the prophet has spoken of his vision as a thing

Go, set a watchman,

Let him declare what he seeth.

And he saw a chariot *with* a couple of horsemen, 7

A chariot of asses, *and* a chariot of camels ;

And he hearkened diligently *with* much heed :

And he cried, A lion : 8

My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime,

And I *am* set in my ward whole nights :

And behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen.

And he answered and said,

Babylon is fallen, is fallen ;

“announced” to him ; now he proceeds to describe, in a very interesting passage, the method of its communication. The delineation is figurative, but seems in some sense to imply a dual consciousness of the writer. The watchman is the prophet himself in the ecstatic condition ; he then sees and hears things beyond human ken. Meanwhile his ordinary waking consciousness is not suspended, but is ready to receive and transmit to the world the “watchman’s” report. The same figure is somewhat differently applied in Hab. ii. 1. For the expression, cf. Jer. vi. 17 ; Ez. iii. 17, xxxiii. 7.

6. *Go, set, &c.*] Render, **Go set the watchman, what he seeth he shall declare.**

7. The verse reads: **And if he see a troop, horsemen in pairs** (2 Ki. ix. 25), **a troop of asses, a troop of camels, then let him hearken, hearken hard.** This apparently is the expected sign that great events are on foot ; when the riders are seen the watchman is to listen intently to discover who they are and what they are doing. The word for “troop” means always “chariot” (usually collective) ; here it must be used in the sense of “riding train” like the Arab. *rakb*. The procession represents the Persian army. “Asses” and “camels” are probably introduced as beasts of burden, although both animals are reported to have been used by the Persians in actual battle.

8. If the text be right, the first clause must read: **And he cried (like) a lion** (Rev. x. 3).

My lord] The A.V. seems here to assume that the prophet is addressed by his watchman. R.V. and most interpreters render “O Lord” (addressed to Jehovah). Nevertheless A.V. may be right, although it requires the substitution of *’Ādônî* for *’Ādônāi*.

in my ward] i.e. “at my post.”

For *whole nights* read “all the nights.”

9. Hardly has he spoken when the appointed vision appears: **And, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs** (see v. 7). And in the same breath the watchman declares its significance: **Babylon is fallen, &c.** (proph. perf.). Cf. Rev. xviii. 1 f.

And all the graven images of her gods he hath broken
unto the ground.

- 10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor:
That which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel,
Have I declared unto you.

- 11 The burden of Dumah.
He calleth to me out of Seir,
Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?

10. The application to Israel, addressed as **my threshing** (i.e. threshed one) and **my child of the threshing-floor**—forcible figurative epithets of Israel as a nation crushed and down-trodden by the brutal tyranny of Babylon (cf. ch. xli. 15; Mi. iv. 12 f.; Jer. li. 33, &c.).

THE ORACLE ON EDM. vv. 11, 12.

The prophet hears (whether in reality or in imagination it is impossible to say) an urgent cry from Seir, inquiring whether the night of distress is nearly over (v. 11). His reply (v. 12) is equivocal and confessedly incomplete; at a later time he may be able to read the signs of the times with a surer vision. The passage is too short and vague to permit any confident conclusion as to its date; but it contains nothing inconsistent with the supposition that it belongs generally to the same period as vv. 1—10. Towards the end of the Exile the Edomites seem to have been on friendly terms with the Babylonians, from whom they had received a considerable extension of territory (Ezek. xxxv. 10 ff., xxxvi. 5 ff.). But the supremacy of Babylon is now threatened by the victorious Cyrus, and Edom is naturally represented as anxious to learn how the unknown issue of the conflict will affect her national and commercial interests.

11. *The burden of Dumah*] The best known place of this name is the *Dûmat el-Jendel* ("rocky Dumah") of the Arabian geographers (mentioned in Gen. xxv. 14). It lay to the north of Tema (v. 14) and south-east of Seir. Jerome is the sole authority for the statement that there was a Dumah in the land of Seir. The word here, however, is probably a play on the name Edom (which is found in the LXX., and in the margin of some Hebr. MSS.), and at the same time an allusion to the mysterious character of the oracle (= "oracle of silence").

He calleth] Render as R. V. **One calleth**.

Watchman, what of the night?] "How far is the night spent: how long till the morning?" It has been suggested that the phrase may have been used in inquiring the time of night of the city watchmen. The word "watchman" here means "guardian" and differs from that employed in v. 6 (one who is on the look out).

The watchman said,
The morning cometh, and also the night:
If ye will inquire, inquire ye:
Return, come.

12

The burden upon Arabia.
In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge,
O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

13

12. *The morning cometh, and also the night*] The watchman's answer is designedly obscure. It may mean either that the seer has obtained no clear vision of the destiny in store for Edom; or that he foresees a transient gleam of prosperity to be followed by a new night of distress; or that hope is dawning for some and gloom settling down on others.

if ye will inquire...] The answer is not final; another time the purpose of Jehovah may be more clearly indicated, if Edom earnestly desires to know it. For *return, come* render with R.V. marg. *come again*. It is impossible to suppose that "return" is used in the sense of "be converted to the worship of Jehovah." The words for "cometh," "inquire" (twice) and "come" are Aramaic.

THE ORACLE ON ARABIA. vv. 13—17.

A vision (vv. 13—15) and its interpretation (vv. 16, 17). A caravan of the merchant-tribe of Dedan is seen driven by stress of war from the regular route, and lurking in solitary places, destitute of food and water. The travellers are succoured by the hospitality of the neighbouring tribe of Tema (vv. 13—15). This vision symbolises a great destruction within a short time of the nomadic Arabs, purposed by Jehovah the God of Israel (16 f.). Here again positive indications of date are wanting. If the oracle belongs to the same group as the two which precede, the enemy would be the Persian conquerors of Babylonia, who are represented as attacking the Arabian caravans that traded under its auspices. A similar threat against Dedan forms part of a prophecy of Jeremiah against Edom in the time of Nebuchadnezzar (xlix. 7 f.).

13. *The burden upon Arabia*] The Oracle "In Arabia" (or, "In the evening"). The catchword of the heading is taken from the second word of the oracle. LXX. omits the title and in the text renders, with a different pointing, "in the evening," which gives a good sense (Ps. xxx. 5). The Massoretic reading may be translated "in Arabia" (Jer. xxv. 24) or "in the desert," although the word occurs nowhere else in this sense. *Forest* must here mean either "scrub" or (like the corresponding Arab. *wa'r*) "rough, stony ground."

travelling companies] *caravans*, as Gen. xxxvii. 25.

Dedanim] *Dedanites* (R.V.). Dedan (Gen. x. 7, xxv. 3) was an important trading tribe of Arabia (Ez. xxvii. 20, xxxviii. 13). Since it is mentioned in connexion with Edom (Jer. xlix. 8; Ez. xxv. 13), its

- 14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water
to him that was thirsty,
They prevented with their bread him that fled.
- 15 For they fled from the swords,
From the drawn sword, and from the bent bow,
And from the grievousness of war.
- 16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me,
Within a year, according to the years of a hireling,
And all the glory of Kedar shall fail:
- 17 And the residue of the number of archers,
The mighty *men* of the children of Kedar, shall be
diminished:
For the LORD God of Israel hath spoken *it*.

possessions were probably somewhere near the north end of the Gulf of Akaba.

14. The caravans are reduced to the direst straits through having to shun the stations on the regular route where alone their stock of food and water could be replenished. The prophet calls on the inhabitants of Tema to supply their necessities. The verse should be rendered: *To the thirsty bring water, O ye inhabitants of the land of Tema, meet the fugitive with bread (suitable) for him.* (See R.V. marg.)

Tema (Gen. xxv. 14; Job vi. 19) is the modern Teima in the northern highlands of Arabia, east of the great pilgrim route from Damascus to Mecca. In O.T. times it was the seat of an important commercial tribe, friendly therefore to the Dedanites.

15. The caravans have deserted the frequented paths, because of armed bands scouring the country.

16 f. The interpretation of the vision is regarded by many commentators as a later appendix similar to ch. xvi. 13 f. There is certainly a surprising resemblance between the two passages, which may suggest that they are both from the same hand.

16. *according to the years of a hireling*] See on xvi. 14.

Kedar] a tribe of pastoral nomads (Is. lx. 7; Ezek. xxvii. 21) in the Syrian desert (Jer. ii. 10), is here apparently a comprehensive designation of the north Arabian tribes (cf. Cant. i. 5; Ps. cxx. 5).

17. *the number of archers*] Lit. "of the bows." The bow was the chief weapon of the Northern Arabs, as of their progenitor Ishmael, Gen. xxi. 20.

CH. XXII. 1—14. THE INEXPIABLE SIN OF JERUSALEM.

The key to this passage—the most lurid and minatory of all Isaiah's prophecies—is the irreconcilable antagonism between the mood of the prophet and the state of public feeling around him. In a time of

universal mirth and festivity he alone is overwhelmed with grief and refuses to be comforted. In the rejoicings of the populace he reads the evidence of their hopeless impenitence and insensibility, and he concludes his discourse by expressing the conviction that at last they have sinned beyond the possibility of pardon. The circumstances recall our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem on the day of His triumphal entry (Luke xix. 41 ff.).

It may be regarded as certain that the prophecy belongs to the period of Sennacherib's invasion (701), although it is difficult to select a moment when all the elements of the highly complex situation with which it deals might have been combined. There is just one incident that seems to meet the requirements of the case, viz., the raising of the blockade of Jerusalem, in consequence of Hezekiah's ignominious submission to the terms of Sennacherib (see General Introd., pp. xxxviii f.) It must be noted that this was not the last episode in that memorable campaign. The real crisis came a little later when the Assyrian king endeavoured by threats to extort the entire surrender of the capital. It was only at that juncture that Hezekiah unreservedly accepted the policy of implicit trust in Jehovah which Isaiah had all along urged on him; and it was then that the prophet stepped to the front with an absolute and unconditional assurance that Jerusalem should not be violated. That the earlier deliverance should have caused an outbreak of popular joy is intelligible enough; as it is also intelligible that Isaiah should have kept his eye fixed on the dangers yet ahead. The allusions to the recent blockade are amply accounted for, and the prophet's expectation of a terrible disaster yet in store is obviously based on his view of the continued and aggravated impenitence of his countrymen.

The following analysis of the prophecy is partly influenced by this reading of the historical setting, and it is right to say that at one or two points the view adopted is somewhat tentative:

i. vv. 1—4. While the city abandons itself to demonstrations of frantic gaiety, in spite of the disgrace that has overtaken the country, Isaiah shuts himself up in solitary and inconsolable anguish.

ii. vv. 5—7. He sees in vision a great day of calamity approaching, when the Assyrian shall again thunder at the gates of Jerusalem; and although the picture is not completed it leaves the impression that the city's day of doom has arrived.

iii. vv. 8—11. At this point (although the transition is extremely abrupt) the prophet seems to go back to the past, in order to trace the evidence of the people's unbelief. In the height of the danger they had paid minute attention to human measures of defence, but with never a thought of Him whose strange work then appealed so closely to their conscience.

iv. vv. 12—14. And this spirit of unbelief remains with them still. It has caused them to misread the providential lesson of their escape, and to find an occasion of thoughtless revelry and merriment in what was so obviously a call to serious reflection and penitence. For such a sin Isaiah has only a "fearful looking-for of judgment" to announce.

1—4. The joy of the people and the sorrow of the prophet.

- 22 The burden of the valley of vision.
 What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up
 to the housetops?
- 2 Thou *that art* full of stirs,
 A tumultuous city, a joyous city:
 Thy slain *men are* not slain with the sword,
 Nor dead in battle.
- 3 All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the
 archers:
 All that are found in thee are bound together, *which*
 have fled from far.
- 4 Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep
 bitterly,
 Labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of
 the daughter of my people.

1. *The burden of the valley of vision*] Or, **The Oracle "Valley of Vision."** The heading (prefixed by an editor) is taken from a phrase in v. 5 (see the note).

What aileth thee now] Better: **What meanest thou, I wonder** (cf. ch. iii. 15).

gone up to the housetops] cf. ch. xv. 3; Jud. xvi. 27; Neh. viii. 16. The flat roofs of the houses are thronged by excited citizens keeping holiday, perhaps watching some public spectacle. The prophet, wandering disconsolate through the streets, ironically inquires the reason of this unseasonable demonstration.

2. *full of stirs*] R.V. **full of shoutings.** *joyous city*] **jubilant city**, as ch. xxxii. 13. A festive disposition seems to have characterised the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Isaiah's time; cf. also ch. v. 14. That their gladness on this occasion was "the forced gaiety of despair" is indicated by nothing in the passage; it was due to the sense of relief from imminent peril.

thy slain...battle] Jerusalem's warriors have not met a glorious death on the battle-field, but have been taken prisoners and ignominiously executed (see v. 3). Some critics, however, take this clause and the next verse as the description of a vision which the prophet has of the future. On that view, which is plausible enough, it would be more natural to think of deaths from famine and pestilence (Lam. iv. 9).

3. *thy rulers*] **thy chieftains**,—the same word as in i. 10, there in its civil, here in its military sense.

they are bound by the archers] Better: **without bow** (which they had thrown away) **they were taken prisoners.**

all that are found in thee] **all of thine that were found.** *which have fled from far*] Rather as R.V. **they fled afar off.** The text of the verse is possibly in some disorder.

4. *Look away from me*] i.e. "leave me alone," as Job vii. 19.

For *it is* a day of trouble, and of treading down, and
of perplexity

By the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision,
Breaking down the walls, and of crying to the moun-
tains.

And Elam bare the quiver

With chariots of men *and* horsemen,

6

labour not is strictly press not upon me, and *spoiling* should be destruction. The prophet's gaze is already on the future.

daughter of my people] The phrase, common in Jeremiah and Lamentations, occurs only here in Isaiah.

5—7. The connexion here becomes very uncertain. It seems clear that v. 5 (from its form) must refer to the future, while vv. 8—11 undoubtedly go back to what is past. The transition must apparently take place either at v. 6 or v. 8. Now the tenses in vv. 6, 7 would be naturally construed as historic perfects, and at first sight it seems obvious that these verses are intimately connected with vv. 8 ff., and belong like them to the past. But on the other hand it has to be considered that (a) v. 5 is too short to stand alone; (b) the preparations for the siege (8 ff.) are in any case distinct from (if not prior to) the assault described in 6 f.; and (c) there is no evidence of an attempt to carry Jerusalem by storm during the first blockade. Hence it seems better, in spite of the violence of the transition at v. 8, to regard vv. 5—7 as an account of what Isaiah has seen in vision, viz., the return of the enemy in force to the city.

5. The first half of the verse reads: **For a day of tumult and trampling and confusion hath Jehovah of hosts**,—"a series of inimitable assonances" (Cheyne) in the Hebr. (cf. Nah. ii. 10 [Heb. 11]). The form of the sentence is the same as in ii. 12.

The words *in the valley of vision* belong (in spite of the accents) to the second half; render: **in the valley of vision** (they are) **battering down the wall, and a cry** (of distress rises) **to the mountain**. "Valley of vision" is taken by some as a proper name (valley of Hizzâyôn), though no such place is known; by others as a mystic name for Jerusalem (like Ariel, xxix. 1), which is hardly possible, since the word for "valley" denotes a deep and narrow ravine. Some particular valley round Jerusalem must be meant, most probably the Tyropœon; but why it is called the "valley of (prophetic) vision" we cannot tell. The suggestion that Isaiah lived and had his visions there is very far-fetched.

6. *Elam* (see on xxi. 2) and *Kir* (not identified: 2 Ki. xvi. 9; Am. i. 5, ix. 7) are mentioned as furnishing auxiliaries to the Assyrian army. There is force in Cheyne's argument that some words may have fallen out before this verse, since it is difficult to understand the prominence given to these mercenary troops in the description of the siege. The "bow of Elam" is mentioned in Jer. xlix. 35.

with chariots of men and horsemen] a difficult expression. Perhaps "men on horseback among the chariots" (Dillm.).

- And Kir uncovered the shield.
- 7 And it shall come to pass, *that* thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots,
And the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.
- 8 And he discovered the covering of Judah,
And thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.
- 9 Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many:
And ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.
- 10 And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem,
And the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.
- 11 Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool:

uncovered the shield] Shields when not in use were protected by a leather covering (Cæs. de Bell. Gall. II. 21).

7. *And it shall come to pass*] strictly, **And it came to pass**, in the scene beheld by the prophet.

set themselves...gate] **take up their station towards the gate.**

8—11. The preparations for the siege. Cf. 2 Chron. xxxii. 2—5, 30; 2 Ki. xx. 20.

8. *he discovered the covering of Judah*] Probably “exposed the defencelessness of the state.” The subj. may be Jehovah or the enemy, or it may be indefinite. The clause is virtually the protasis to the following “And when the defencelessness of Judah was exposed, thou didst look, &c.”

the house of the forest] of Lebanon (1 Ki. vii. 2, x. 17). It was evidently used as an arsenal.

9. The first half reads **Ye saw** (i.e. examined) **the breaches of the city of David** (the citadel of Zion, 2 Sam. v. 7, 9) **for they were many**. Jerusalem was evidently quite unfit to stand a siege. The water supply was still defective, as it had been 34 years before (see ch. vii. 3). The *lower pool* is not elsewhere mentioned, although its existence is implied by ch. vii. 3. It was obviously within the walls, and probably lay near the mouth of the Tyropœon Valley.

10. *And ye have numbered the houses*] **And ye numbered**, apparently to see which could best be spared for the purpose specified in the next clause,—“to fortify the wall,” cf. Jer. xxxiii. 4.

11. For *ditch* read **reservoir** as R.V. The “old pool” is very probably the pool of Siloam (though this is not certain) and the “reservoir” would be intended to retain its surplus water.

between the two walls] a part of the city adjoining the royal gardens, where there was a gate (see 2 Ki. xxv. 4; Jer. xxxix. 4, lii. 7). The

But ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof,
Neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long
ago.

And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to ¹²
weeping, and to mourning,

And to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

And behold joy and gladness, 13

Slaying oxen, and killing sheep,

Eating flesh, and drinking wine:

Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall
die.

And it was revealed in mine ears *by* the LORD of ¹⁴
hosts,

locality is doubtless the entrance of the Tyropœon Valley, where the wall of the Western Hill and that of Zion (and Ophel) met at a sharp angle. The space so designated was of course outside the city; whether it was protected by a third wall crossing the valley we do not know.

but ye have not looked...] **but ye looked not.** This clause carries us back to vv. 8, 9, where the same two verbs ("looked," "saw") are employed.

the Maker thereof] Better **him that did it.**

fashioned it long ago] lit. **formed it from afar.** The sin of the rulers of Jerusalem is that same indifference to the work of Jehovah with which the prophet had charged them many years before (see v. 12). To Isaiah, history is the evolution of a consistent, pre-determined plan of Jehovah, to the men of his day it was merely a confused struggle between opposing forces. Their failure to discern the hand of God in the events that had befallen them was the crowning proof of their spiritual insensibility; their ill-timed frivolity on this occasion seemed to the prophet to seal their fate.

12—14. The ignoring of Jehovah's presence in this crisis is an unpardonable sin.

12. *in that day did the Lord...call*] not only by the silent march of events, but also by the voice of His prophet: see ch. xxxii. 11. The call was to seriousness and humiliation, expressed by the customary signs of mourning. (Cf. Joel ii. 12; Am. viii. 10; Is. iii. 24, xx. 2, &c.)

13. Instead of this the people rush to drown reflection in riotous festivities. The immediate occasion of the revelry was no doubt a great sacrifice of thanksgiving to Jehovah for their unexpected deliverance, but this only rendered their irreligious spirit more detestable to Jehovah (cf. i. 10—17).

for to morrow we shall die] Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 32. Probably a current proverb. But the revellers may very well have been conscious that their escape had only procured for them a precarious respite. And in the next verse Isaiah assures them that they *shall* die.

14. *And it was revealed...hosts*] Render with R.V. **And Jehovah**

Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till
ye die,
Saith the Lord God of hosts.

15 Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto
this treasurer, *even* unto Shebna, which *is* over the house,
and say,

of hosts revealed himself in mine ears. The message comes to the prophet like an external voice, which he knows to be that of the Lord (cf. ch. v. 9).

Surely...] The form is that of adjuration (cf. xiv. 24).
purged from you] Better; *expiated for you*. Cf. 1 Sam. iii. 14. The threat neither implies that the sin could be expiated by the death of the sinner, nor means merely that guilt would lie on them as long as they lived; it is a definite intimation that the unexpiated sin will call down punishment, and the punishment will be death.

CH. XXII. 15—25. A PHILIPPIC AGAINST AN INFLUENTIAL POLITICIAN.

Shebna, the minister here addressed, is supposed from his name and from Isaiah's indignation at his ambitious desire to have a magnificent sepulchre in Jerusalem, to have been a foreigner in the royal service. The office which he holds is the highest in the court, and is of course a measure of his influence with the king. That he was a partisan of the Egyptian alliance may be safely assumed, and it is likely that Isaiah had found in him the most astute and resolute opponent of the policy which he advocated. This opposition, together with hearty contempt for the character of the man, is the occasion of Isaiah's only invective against an individual. The prophecy is therefore probably contemporaneous with ch. xxviii.—xxxi. Eliakim was probably the leader of the party favourable to Isaiah's views, and the substitution of the one minister for the other was equivalent to a radical change of policy on the part of Hezekiah. This change seems to have taken place before the crisis of the invasion, for in ch. xxxvi. 3, xxxvii. 2 we find Eliakim in possession of the dignity which Shebna here holds. But since the latter then occupied the lower office of secretary, we must conclude that some compromise had been arranged, and that Shebna's power was not altogether broken.

The passage contains three parts:

i. The denunciation of Shebna, and the announcement of his deposition and banishment, *vv.* 15—19.

ii. The installation of Eliakim, and the honour of his family, *vv.* 20—23.

iii. A very perplexing appendix, which seems to warn Eliakim against nepotism, and to anticipate the ruin of his house, *vv.* 24, 25.

15. *this treasurer*] Better: *this official*. The "this" is contemptuous. The word for "official" (*sôkēn*) is not elsewhere found. It

What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, 16
That thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here,
As he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high,
And that graveth a habitation for himself in a rock?
Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty 17
captivity,
And will surely cover thee.
He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball 18

seems to mean either "associate" (like the "king's friend" of 2 Sam. xv. 37, xvi. 16; 1 Ki. iv. 5; 1 Chron. xxvii. 33), or "administrator" (the Assyrian *šaknu*).

which is over the house] (cf. 1 Ki. iv. 6, xviii. 3). This office has been compared to that of "mayor of the palace" under the Merovingian kings.

16. We may imagine the meeting between Isaiah and the vizier to have taken place at the sepulchre which the latter, after the Eastern fashion, was having prepared in his lifetime. By this act the *novus homo* asserted his equality with the aristocracy of Jerusalem, a piece of presumption which evidently kindles the ire of the prophet.

What hast thou (to do) here? and whom (as kindred or descendants) *hast thou here?*] i.e. "Thou neither hast the rights of a citizen, nor canst claim to be the founder of a family." Shebna's grave was simply the monument of his own vulgar and ostentatious vanity.

that thou hast hewed...here] (see below)—in so conspicuous a position. That Shebna actually placed his tomb amongst those of the kings and princes of Judah is not to be assumed; but he had plainly chosen a pretentious situation.

as he that heweth...] Render: **Hewing out his sepulchre on high! Graving in the rock an habitation for him!** Ejaculations of unutterable scorn. The use of the third person suggests that there were bystanders.

17, 18. The doom of Shebna is set forth in language of extraordinary force and passion.

17. *will carry thee away...captivity*] Translate: **will fling thee forth violently, O thou man.** The A.V. preserves the sense but entirely misses the bold metaphor, which is carried on to the middle of v. 18. The next words *and will surely cover thee*, when so rendered, hardly suit the context. The verb may be the equivalent of an Arabic verb, meaning "seize," which gives an appropriate idea, although it is the solitary instance in the O.T. Render accordingly: **and will seize thee firmly** (lit. "with a seizing").

18. The first half of the verse reads: **He will roll thee up in a bundle (and toss thee) like a ball into a spacious land** (lit. "a land broad on both sides," as Gen. xxxiv. 21; Jud. xviii. 10). The words "and toss thee" have to be supplied from the context; the construction is pregnant. The figure expresses banishment from Jehovah's territory, the "spacious land" referring probably to the Assyrian Empire.

Into a large country :

There shalt thou die,

And there the chariots of thy glory

Shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

19 And I will drive thee from thy station,

And from thy state shall he pull thee down.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day,

That I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah :

21 And I will clothe him with thy robe,

And strengthen him *with* thy girdle,

And I will commit thy government into his hand :

And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

And to the house of Judah.

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder ;

So he shall open, and none shall shut ;

there shalt thou die (cf. Am. vii. 17) *and there shall be thy splendid chariots, thou shame of thy lord's house*] To ride forth with "chariots and horses" was once regarded as a sign of aspiring to the highest dignity (2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Ki. i. 5); later it seems to have been the privilege of the princely caste (Jer. xvii. 25), peculiarly offensive, therefore, in a foreign adventurer. The concentrated bitterness of the last words points to something worse than political differences as the cause of Isaiah's antipathy to Shebna.

19. The subject here is Jehovah; the change of person resembles that in x. 12. After v. 18, the verse reads like an anti-climax, but it is added to prepare for

20—23. The elevation of the head of the prophetic party at court.

20. Eliakim is called *my servant* as Isaiah is in ch. xx. 3.

21. *robe* ("tunic")...*girdle*] The palace officials seem to have worn distinctive liveries (1 Ki. x. 5); the uniform of the vizier was apparently a tunic and a girdle of special pattern. The word for "girdle" is used elsewhere only of the priestly girdle (see Ex. xxxix. 29, &c.). For *strengthen*, translate *gird*.

he shall be a father—a beneficent administrator, as Shebna had not been. How much in the East the welfare of the people depends on the character of the vizier is known from the legends of Haroun-al-Rashid. For the expression cf. Gen. xlv. 8; 1 Macc. xi. 32.

22. *the key of the house of David*] The symbol of unlimited authority over the royal household, carrying with it a similar influence in all affairs of state; like Pharaoh's signet-ring in the hands of Joseph, Gen. xli. 40—44. *upon his shoulder*] Cf. ix. 6; and with the whole verse comp. Rev. iii. 7.

And he shall shut, and none shall open.

And I will fasten him *as* a nail in a sure place; 23

And he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, 24

The offspring and the issue,

All vessels of small quantity,

From the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, 25

Shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed,

And be cut down, and fall;

And the burden that *was* upon it shall be cut off:

For the LORD hath spoken *it*.

23. *a nail*] usually a "tent-peg" (and so probably in a figurative sense, Zech. x. 4); but also (Ez. xv. 3) a peg on which household utensils are suspended. The latter idea (according to v. 25) must be intended here.

a glorious throne] Better: **a seat of honour.**

to his father's house]—all his nearest kindred, who are through him advanced from obscurity to great dignity.

24, 25. If v. 24 stood alone it might be barely possible to interpret it in a sense favourable to Eliakim. But taken in connexion with v. 25 it seems to convey an imputation of the unworthy exercise of patronage on his part,—a filling of important offices with worthless relatives and dependents. Many commentators, it is true, hold that v. 25 refers back to the fall of Shebna, but this is quite arbitrary. Shebna is *not* likened to a "nail in a sure place" and it is clearly implied that he had no "father's house" in Jerusalem (v. 16). It is hardly credible that Isaiah should have uttered such a threat along with the promises in vv. 20—23; but the last two verses may be an appendix written later, when abuses of trust in Eliakim's family had begun to display themselves.

24. An under-current of satire seems unmistakeable.

all the glory] perhaps: **the whole weight** (see "burden" in next verse).

the offspring and the issue] **the scions and the offshoots** (Cheyne).

The second expression is decidedly contemptuous, and so (more or less) are all that follow. It cannot be to Eliakim's credit that the bulk of his relations are likened to the meanest kitchen utensils.

25. The fall of Eliakim's house, described under the same metaphor. It is not necessarily implied that the minister himself lived to see this reverse of fortune; living or dead, his name was the "peg" of the family's nobility, and when the crash came, it might truly be said that the "peg fastened in a sure place" had been removed.

23 The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish;

CH. XXIII. AN ORACLE ON TYRE.

The unique position occupied by Tyre in the ancient world engaged the attention of more than one Hebrew prophet. Ezekiel, in one of the most original and elaborate of his foreign prophecies (ch. xxvi.—xxviii.), where he announces her impending overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar, shews the liveliest appreciation of the genius of that great commercial city, her unbounded enterprise, her devotion to material interests, and her self-deifying pride. Very similar in spirit is the simpler and shorter passage now before us, which, however, is not directed exclusively against Tyre, but embraces the older though less famous Zidon, and the whole Phœnician sea-board.

The chapter is clearly divided into two sections:—

i. *vv.* 1—14. A poem in three strophes on the destruction of the Phœnician cities and harbours, which is conceived as having already taken place.

(1) *vv.* 1—5. Ships of Tarshish, homeward bound, are dismayed on their arrival at Cyprus by the intelligence that the harbours of Phœnicia are closed to them (1); the once populous and thriving coast-land lies desolate (2, 3); the sea is now a childless mother and forgets that she ever had offspring (4); Egypt is stricken with terror at the report of the fall of Tyre (5).

(2) *vv.* 6—9. The inhabitants of Phœnicia are ironically urged to leave the joyous cities which had been theirs from time immemorial, and seek refuge in their colonies beyond the sea (6, 7). For this is the purpose of Jehovah, to make an end of the regal power of Tyre, and cast contempt on all earthly greatness (8, 9).

(3) *vv.* 10—14. But Jehovah's power reaches over the sea, and not even in their own colonies can the exiled Phœnicians find rest for the sole of their foot. The distant Tarshish disowns their authority, the nearer Cyprus is also, for an unexplained reason, untenable. At the obscure *v.* 13 we lose the thread of the writer's thought, but in *v.* 14 the poem ends as it had begun with an apostrophe to the ships of Tarshish, whose haven is demolished.

ii. *vv.* 15—18 form an appendix written in a prose style (with the exception of the "harlot's song," a snatch of popular poetry, in *v.* 16). It announces the restoration of Tyre after the lapse of seventy years, but a restoration under entirely changed conditions, in which the gains of Tyre shall be consecrated to Jehovah and the use of His people.

There appear to be no valid reasons for refusing to ascribe the authorship of *vv.* 1—14 to Isaiah. The only serious difficulty is caused by the reference to "the land of the Chaldeans" in *v.* 13; but there the text is in all probability corrupt (see the notes). There are two occasions in the time of Isaiah to which the prophecy has been referred. The earlier is the campaign of Shalmaneser IV. (727—722) against Phœnicia, described at length in a fragment of Menander of Ephesus

For it is laid waste, so that *there is* no house, no entering in :

From the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

(Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 14, 2). Shalmaneser is said to have blockaded the insular part of Tyre for five years; but as his entire reign was only about five years, it is probable that the siege (like that of Samaria) was finished by Sargon. That the city was captured is nowhere stated, and the reticence of Sargon rather suggests that the siege issued in a capitulation. Phœnicia was again ravaged by Sennacherib in the expedition of 701, just before the invasion of Philistia and Judah, when the king of Zidon actually fled to Cyprus. Tyre is not mentioned in the Assyrian record of this campaign. Either of these invasions would furnish an adequate occasion for Isaiah's prophecy, though the second is perhaps less probable than the first. It may at least be said that the lyrical character of the passage is more intelligible when the prophet was a disinterested spectator of events in Phœnicia, than under the strain of excitement with which he faced the crisis of 701. It is true that Tyre did not then suffer the complete overthrow which is here contemplated; but it was nevertheless the first time that her existence had been seriously threatened, and the absence of a literal fulfilment affords no presumption against the genuineness of a prophecy.

The appendix (vv. 15—18) has been thought to bear the stamp of a later origin. The seventy years' duration of the humiliation of Tyre may be based on Jeremiah's (xxv. 11 f.) determination of the period of Chaldæan supremacy, and the use to which the riches of Tyre are to be put (v. 18) is perhaps suggested by such late prophecies as Is. xlv. 14, lx. 11, lxi. 6. The case, therefore, appears to be closely parallel to that of the oracle on Egypt in ch. xix. In both we have a prophecy which is presumably Isaianic, followed by a supplement which there is reason to regard as post-exilic.

1. The returning ships are apprised, at the last stage of their voyage, of the disaster that has overtaken their mother-country. *Ships of Tarshish* may mean here, literally, "ships trading with Tarshish" (Tartessus) at the mouth of the Guadalquivir in Spain. See on ii. 16.

it is laid waste] The unexpressed subject is best left indefinite,—
"a destruction has been wrought."

no house, no entering in] i.e. "no house (harbour) to enter in." Cf. ch. xxiv. 10 "every house is shut up so that none can enter." The last word, however, might be joined with the following clause, which would then run: *since leaving the land of Chittim*, &c. The vessels learn of the fall of Tyre, not *at* Cyprus, but on their voyage thence. The *Chittim* are the inhabitants of Kition, in the south of Cyprus, rounded by the Phœnicians. The name was extended to the whole island, and ultimately in biblical usage to the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean (Dan. xi. 30).

it is revealed to them] whether by rumour from flying vessels, or by eye-sight as they approached the shore, does not appear.

- 2 Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle;
Thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over
the sea, have replenished.
- 3 And by great waters the seed of Sihor,
The harvest of the river, *is* her revenue;
And she is a mart of nations.
- 4 Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken,
Even the strength of the sea, saying,
I travail not, nor bring forth children,
Neither do I nourish up young men, *nor* bring up
virgins.
- 5 As *at* the report concerning Egypt,

2. The prophet next apostrophises the *inhabitants of the coast* (render so, as in ch. xx. 6), i.e. Phœnicia, calling them to *be still*, or rather **dumb**, with bewilderment.

the merchants (in Heb. collective sing.) *of Zidon*] Zidon is generally interpreted throughout this prophecy as standing for Phœnicia as a whole. This is perhaps unnecessary, although it can easily be justified by usage (see Deut. iii. 9; Jud. iii. 3; 1 Ki. xi. 1, &c.). Zidon is said to have been the most ancient of the Phœnician settlements, and its merchants might naturally be spoken of as having founded the commercial prosperity of the country.

3. The easiest translation would be: **and on great waters the seed of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, (was) her revenue, and it** (i.e. her revenue) **was the gain of the nations.** *Shihor* might be a name for the Nile, as in Jer. ii. 18; and the meaning would be that the revenue of Tyre (or Phœnicia) was derived from the sea-traffic in Egyptian grain. This was no doubt the case to some extent; but to suppose that the corn trade with Egypt was a principal source of wealth to Tyre is contrary to all the information we possess. The expression of the thought, moreover, is involved and enigmatic, and even if we call to our aid the subtle suggestion that Tyre, with no agriculture of her own, nevertheless reaped a rich harvest by her command of the sea, the idea is still unworthy of Isaiah, and of the rest of this poem.

The translation *mart* in E.V., instead of "gain" or "merchandise" is hardly justifiable.

4. *even the strength of the sea*] Better as R.V. **the stronghold of the sea.** The fine figure of the lonely sea denying that she ever had children is somewhat marred by the introduction of this clause, as if the poet had corrected himself by an afterthought, and changed the subject of personification from the sea to Tyre. One is tempted to remove the words as a gloss.

I travail not, nor bring forth, &c.] Render with R.V. **I have not travailed, nor brought forth, neither have I nourished young men, nor brought up** (cf. ch. i. 2) **virgins.**

5. The verse should be read as in R.V. **When the report cometh to**

So shall they be sorely pained *at* the report of Tyre.
Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the 6
isle.

Is this your joyous *city*, whose antiquity *is* of ancient 7
days?

Her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning 8
city,

Whose merchants *are* princes, whose traffickers *are* the
honourable of the earth?

Egypt, they shall be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. Assyria being the common enemy of Egypt and Tyre, the report of the latter's fall is received with the utmost anxiety in Egypt.

6. The second strophe commences here with a summons to the Phœnicians to betake themselves to their Spanish colony for refuge, their own country being at the mercy of the invader. So the Tyrians, when attacked by Alexander the Great, sent all those unfit for war to Carthage, another western colony. Gesenius instances also the projected emigration of the Dutch merchants to Batavia in 1672 if the independence of Holland should be overthrown.

7. The reference is of course to Tyre, the principal subject of the prophecy.

whose antiquity...days] Next to Zidon, Tyre was regarded as the most ancient city of Phœnicia. Her priests claimed for their temple the fabulous antiquity of 2300 years in the time of Herodotus (II. 44); Josephus dates the city's foundation 240 years before the building of Solomon's Temple (*Ant.* VIII. 3, 1).

her own feet shall carry her...] Render: **whose feet used to carry her....** The reference is not to the future captivity or flight of the Tyrians (for which the expressions are unsuitable) but to the long journeys and residence in foreign parts of her enterprising merchants.

8, 9. This is the execution of Jehovah's purpose, and therefore irreversible.

the crowning city] Or, **the crown-giver.** Tyre is rightly so-called, inasmuch as some of her colonies (Kition, Tarshish and Carthage) were ruled by kings, subject to the mother-city.

whose traffickers] The word is probably the gentile noun "Canaanite" which is used with the sense of "trader" in Job xli. 6 [Heb. xl. 30]; Prov. xxxi. 24; Zech. xiv. 21, as the collective name "Canaan" is in older passages (Hos. xii. 7; Zeph. i. 11). It was of course from the commercial proclivities of the Phœnicians themselves that the word acquired this secondary significance amongst the Hebrews. The petty trade of Palestine seems to have been largely in the hands of Tyrian dealers (Neh. xiii. 16 ff.) and hence a Canaanite came to mean a merchant, just as a Chaldean came to mean an astrologer and a Scotchman in some parts of England meant a pedlar.

- 9 The LORD of hosts hath purposed it,
To stain the pride of all glory,
And to bring into contempt all the honourable of the
earth.
- 10 Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tar-
shish:
There is no more strength.
- 11 He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the
kingdoms:
The LORD hath given a commandment against the
merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof.
- 12 And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice,
O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon:

9. Jehovah has purposed it in accordance with a fixed principle of His government.

to stain (render to desecrate) the pride of all glory] The thought is the same as in ch. ii. 12 ff. For this use of the verb "desecrate," cf. Ez. xxviii. 7.

10—14. The third strophe, as usually explained, deals mainly with the emancipation of the Phœnician colonies from the somewhat stringent control of Tyre. But the passage presents many difficulties; and from the utter uncertainty as to the meaning of v. 13 the general sense is doubtful.

10. *as a river]* Rather: **as the Nile** (as R.V.). The people of Tarshish are now as free of the land they live in as the Nile is of Egypt in the time of the annual inundation.

there is no more strength] Render as in R.V. **there is no girdle** (about thee) **any more**. The "girdle" (cf. Ps. cix. 19) is supposed to be a symbol of the restraints hitherto imposed on the colonists by Tyre. But nowhere else is a man represented as hampered by his own girdle; the removal of it is rather a synonym for weakness (Job xii. 21—the same root as here—cf. Is. v. 27).

11. *He stretched out his hand, &c.]* R.V. **he hath stretched out... hath shaken**. Cf. ch. v. 25, xiv. 26, 27. The *kingdoms* are specially Phœnicia and its dependencies.

the merchant city] Read **Canaan** and see on v. 8. "Canaan" is the name used by the Phœnicians of themselves and their colonists, but this is the only example in the Old Test. of its restriction to Phœnicia.

12. *And he said]* What follows may be regarded as the "commandment" referred to in v. 11.

O thou oppressed (or ravished) virgin, daughter of Zidon] The epithet "virgin" is applied to Zidon as a fortress hitherto unviolated by a conqueror. It is an almost inevitable inference that the calamity here described is the first she has known, at least within living memory. This would apply to the campaign of Shalmaneser, but not to that of Sennacherib.

Arise, pass over *to* Chittim;
 There also shalt thou have no rest.
 Behold the land of the Chaldeans;
 This people was not,
 Till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in
 the wilderness:
 They set up the towers thereof,
 They raised up the palaces thereof;
 And he brought it to ruin.
 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

13

15

And it shall come to pass in that day,

13. Every attempt to extract a meaning from the verse as it stands is beset by insuperable difficulties. Perhaps the best suggestion is that the fate of Chaldæa is mentioned as a warning example to Tyre: "Behold the land of the Chaldæans; this people is no more; the Assyrian hath appointed it for the beasts of the wilderness, &c." (so R.V.). This is a fairly good sense; only, "this people is no more" is hardly a possible rendering of the Hebrew. The reference is supposed to be to one (probably the last) of Sennacherib's three conquests of Babylonia, which were certainly carried out with a thoroughness which would justify the terms of the prophecy. But is there any evidence that Babylonia was known as the "land of the Chaldæans" before the rise of the Chaldæan Empire? There is none in the Bible.—The text is certainly in disorder, and there is little hope of recovering the original reading. Ewald's attractive emendation of "Canaanites" for "Chaldæans" fails to meet the case, for the exclamation "Behold the land of the Canaanites" surely comes too late after so much has been said of the ruin of this very land. The most acute analysis of the verse is that of Duhm, although, as is usual with this commentator, it involves an extensive manipulation of the text. To the original prophecy he assigns only the first and last clauses, and for "Chaldæans" he substitutes "Chittim": Behold the land of Chittim, he (Jehovah) hath made it a ruin—a continuation of the thought of the preceding verse. The intermediate clauses are regarded as an interpolation and are ingeniously explained as follows: "this is the people that was founded by the sea-farers (cf. Num. xxiv. 24), they erected its watch-towers, its cities and its palaces." It seems a pity that so good a sentence should be denied to the prophet.

14. The poem closes as it began with an apostrophe to the ships of Tarshish.

your strength] **your strong-hold** (R.V. as in v. 4).

15—18. The appendix. Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years; afterwards she shall resume her commercial activity, but its profits shall be dedicated to Jehovah's people.

That Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years,
According to the days of one king:

After the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as a
harlot.

16 Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast
been forgotten;

Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest
be remembered.

17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy
years,

That the LORD will visit Tyre,

And she shall turn to her hire,

And shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of
the world

Upon the face of the earth.

18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to
the LORD:

15. *seventy years*] The period fixed by Jeremiah for the duration of the Exile and the dominion of the Chaldaean Empire (ch. xxv. 11 f., xxix. 10). The number occurs frequently in the later literature: Zech. i. 12, vii. 5; Dan. ix. 2 ff.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. It is to be noted that in all these cases there is a reference more or less explicit to Jeremiah's prediction; and the use of the number here is probably to be accounted for in the same way. Ezekiel had used the number "forty" in a precisely similar manner (ch. iv. 6, xxix. 13).

according to the days of one king] The meaning is uncertain. Possibly it denotes a fixed, unalterable order of things, such as is maintained by the even rule of a single monarch. Some take it to mean "during the existence of one dynasty."

shall Tyre sing as a harlot] Rather: **it shall happen to Tyre according to the song of the harlot**,—evidently a well-known popular ballad, quoted in the next verse.

16. The song of the harlot, celebrating the wiles by which a forgotten prostitute seeks to regain her influence. The song has a light, dancing rhythm, and consists of six lines of two words each.

make sweet melody] Better: **play skilfully**.

17. The application of the song to Tyre. The comparison of commerce to prostitution is found in Rev. xviii. 3 and perhaps in Nah. iii. 4. Here it signalises the mercenary motive which was prominent in Tyre's dealings with other nations.

shall return to her hire] Shall resume her former lucrative activity. The last word is a technical term for the hire of a harlot.

18. *merchandise* and *hire* are synonymous; the one is the literal, the other the metaphorical designation of the same fact.

holiness to the LORD] i.e. "dedicated" to Jehovah (in opposition to

It shall not be treasured nor laid up;
 For her merchandise shall be for them that dwell
 before the LORD,
 To eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

the letter of Deut. xxiii. 18). The word has no ethical sense; and the idea of "commerce as the handmaid of religion," if by that it is meant that Tyre's commerce is to be conducted in a religious spirit, is foreign to the passage. Tyre is still a "harlot" as of old, and her conversion to the true God does not appear to be contemplated here.

shall not be treasured nor laid up] as formerly, for the benefit of Tyre herself. Those *that dwell before the LORD* are the Jewish people, who according to another prophecy (ch. lxi. 6) are the priests of humanity.

For *durable* read *stately*, as R.V. marg. The word is not found elsewhere.

CHAPTERS XXIV.—XXVII.

It is admitted on all hands that this interesting and difficult group of chapters, although without a heading, forms a distinct section of the book of Isaiah. They consist of a single connected prophecy, interspersed with lyrical and devotional passages, which appear in some instances to interrupt the sequence of thought. The general theme is one of the most familiar in prophecy; it is the "day of Jehovah" in its terrors, and with its blessed consequences for Israel and for humanity. But the treatment of that theme is in many respects unique in the prophetic literature. That the writer had a definite historical situation in view is abundantly manifest; but its features are designedly veiled by the use of mysterious and symbolical language, the precise significance of which frequently eludes our grasp. This is one characteristic of the class of writings known as apocalypses, and the strongly-marked apocalyptic character of the ideas and imagery has impressed nearly all commentators. There has perhaps been a tendency to exaggerate this feature; if we compare the passage with a typical apocalypse, like the book of Daniel, the differences are certainly more striking than the resemblances. In religious importance and depth the chapters are second to nothing in the prophets. Two great truths in particular, the universality of salvation and the hope of immortality, stand out with a clearness and boldness of conception nowhere surpassed in the Old Testament.

The critical questions which arise in connexion with these chapters are so intricate, and depend so much on the explanation of obscure allusions, that it will be convenient to economise space by postponing the consideration of them until the detailed exposition is finished.

CH. XXIV. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT AND ITS PREMONITORY SIGNS.

The chapter is mainly an announcement of the last judgment, but partly also a gloomy survey of the actual state of the world. The writer

24 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste,

feels that he is living in the last days, and in the universal wretchedness and confusions of the age he seems to discern the "beginning of sorrows." His thoughts glide almost imperceptibly from the one point of view to the other, now describing the distress and depression which exist, and now the more terrible visitation which is imminent. It is only at *v.* 21 that the transition is finally made to the absolute language of prophecy. The line of thought is as follows:

vv. 1—3. The prophecy opens with a "word" of Jehovah,—the announcement of an imminent and sweeping catastrophe affecting the whole earth, and involving all ranks and classes of society in a common destruction.

vv. 4—9. The earth is described as withering under a curse, because of the universal depravity and guilt of its inhabitants (4—6). Wine and music, the customary tokens of social enjoyment, have ceased; life has lost its zest; the world is profoundly unhappy (7—9).

vv. 10—12 depict the desolation and misery of an unnamed city, which, however, is but typical of the state of things everywhere.

v. 13. Resuming the language of prophecy, the writer foretells, under an image borrowed from Isaiah, the almost complete extermination of the race of men (*cf.* *v.* 6).

vv. 14—16. Here for a moment, "the vision of ruin is interrupted: borne from afar, over the western waters, the chorus of praise rising from the lips of the redeemed, falls upon the prophet's ear" (Driver). Yet, under the influence of his immediate surroundings, he feels that such rejoicing is premature; and the response of his heart is a cry of agony. For he knows that judgment has not yet had its perfect work; and accordingly, in

vv. 17—20, he returns to his main theme, accumulating images of destruction, in order to set forth the appalling magnitude of the catastrophe about to overwhelm the earth.

vv. 21—23. Here the prophecy reaches its climax in the announcement of Jehovah's appearance to vanquish the powers of evil in heaven and in the high places of the world, and to establish His everlasting throne in visible splendour on Mount Zion.

1—3 briefly announce the theme of the whole discourse, a final and universal judgment on the world.

1. *Behold, the LORD maketh...waste*] The construction in Heb. is the *fut. instans*,—"is about to empty." The metaphor of the verse (*cf.* Nah. ii. 10) is exceedingly expressive, the words being "those which were used for cleaning a dirty dish" (G. A. Smith). *Cf.* 2 Ki. xxi. 13. The language exhibits the fondness for assonance which is a marked peculiarity of the writer's style, far in excess of anything of the kind in Isaiah.

the earth] Not "the land" (R.V. marg.) of Judah or Palestine. "The prophecy leaps far beyond all particular or national conditions."

And turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

And it shall be, as *with* the people, so *with* the priest;
As *with* the servant, so *with* his master;
As *with* the maid, so *with* her mistress;
As *with* the buyer, so *with* the seller;
As *with* the lender, so *with* the borrower;
As *with* the taker of usury, so *with* the giver of usury to him.

The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: 3
For the LORD hath spoken this word.

The earth mourneth *and* fadeth away, 4
The world languisheth *and* fadeth away,
The haughty people of the earth do languish.

The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; 5
Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance,

Broken the everlasting covenant:

2. The judgment affects all classes alike, without distinction of rank or fortune.

as with the people...priest] Cf. Hos. iv. 9. It would hardly be safe to infer from this proverbial expression that at the time of the author the priests formed the aristocracy of the Jewish people. *the buyer...the seller*] Ez. vii. 12. *the taker...the giver of usury*] Jer. xv. 10.

3. For *land* read *earth* as vv. 1, 4, &c.

4—6. The earth lies under a curse on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

4. *mourneth...languisheth...fadeth away*] Another instance of paronomasia in the original. Cf. ch. xxxiii. 9; Hos. iv. 3; Joel i. 10.

the haughty people] Lit. "the height of the people," i.e. **the noblest of the people**. It is the only case where the word is so used (though cf. Eccles. x. 6).

5. *The earth also is defiled* (literally, **profaned**) *under the inhabitants thereof*] That the land of Israel is profaned by the sins of its people, is a prominent idea in the O.T.; the conception is here extended to the whole earth. The condition of the world resembles that which preceded the Deluge (Gen. vi. 11).

changed the ordinance] Rather, **disregarded** (lit. "passed by") **the ordinance**.

the everlasting covenant] The expression is taken from Gen. ix. 16, and refers to the covenant made after the flood with Noah and his family as representatives of the human race. The sin of the world lies in the violation of these fundamental dictates of morality, especially the

- 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
And they that dwell therein are desolate:
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned,
And few men left.
- 7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth,
All the merryhearted do sigh.
- 8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that
rejoice endeth,
The joy of the harp ceaseth.
- 9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.
- 10 The city of confusion is broken down:
Every house is shut up, that no *man may* come in.
- 11 *There is* a crying for wine in the streets;

law against murder, which is the principal stipulation of the Noachic covenant (Gen. ix. 5, 6). The conception is probably a late one.

6. *hath the* (or *a*) *curse devoured the earth*] Cf. Zech. v. 3.

are desolate] Render with R.V., **are found guilty**.

the inhabitants of the earth are burned] or **burn** under the curse, which is the expression of the Divine wrath. The verb (*hārar*) means "to glow" (Ez. xxiv. 11) or "be parched" (Job xxx. 30), not "be burned up."

few men left] Desolating and protracted wars have reduced the population of all countries; but the process of extermination is not yet at an end (see v. 13).

7—9. Joy has vanished from the earth.

7. Cf. Joel i. 10, 12.

8, 9. On the use of music at feasts, along with wine, see ch. v. 11, 12; Am. vi. 5. The verbs in v. 9 should be rendered in the present tense.

10—12. Even the "city," usually the scene of busy and joyous life, shares in the universal sadness. It is difficult to say whether a particular city is meant, or whether the word is used collectively for cities in general. The fulness of the picture gives the impression that the writer has a particular city before his mind, although it stands as a type of many others throughout the world. If this be so, it is most natural to refer the description to Jerusalem, where the prophecy seems to have been written.

10. *The city of confusion*] (or **of chaos**, Gen. i. 2) need not mean "the city destined to become a chaos," still less "the city of idolatry," which of course would be epithets inapplicable to Jerusalem. It may simply be equivalent to "the wasted city."

every house...come in] (cf. ch. xxiii. 1) i.e. the surviving inhabitants have barred their doors, suspicious of the intrusion of unbidden guests.

11. *a crying for wine*] Rather, as R.V.: **a crying because of the wine**. The word for *streets*, meaning strictly "that which is without," is by some rendered "fields"; but this is less natural.

All joy is darkened,
 The mirth of the land is gone.
 In the city is left desolation, 12
 And the gate is smitten *with* destruction.
 When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among 13
 the people,
There shall be as the shaking of an olive tree,
And as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.
 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing, 14
 For the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud
 from the sea.
 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, 15

the mirth of the earth is gone] Lit. "gone into exile."

12. *In the city is left desolation*] after its mirth has gone into banishment.

13. The whole human race must perish, with the exception of an insignificant remnant. Render: **For so shall it be in the midst of the earth among the peoples as at the beating of an olive-tree, as the after-gleaning when the vintage is over.** The images are borrowed from ch. xvii. 6, and are used in the same sense.

14—16. Already, indeed, the prophet can hear songs of praise ascending from distant parts of the earth, hailing the dawn of a better day; but he himself cannot share these enthusiastic hopes. It is not likely that this representation is purely ideal. Events must have occurred which excited the premature expectation of an immediate deliverance. It is difficult to conceive the historical situation which is presupposed. The most natural supposition will be that the singers referred to are Israelites of the Dispersion, who follow with sympathetic interest the development of some great crisis in the fortunes of the people of God, but whose vision is unable to perceive the darker signs of the times which are manifest to the prophet. A more exact determination of the circumstances must depend on the date which is found best to harmonise all the indications of the prophecy.

14. *They shall lift up their voice*] Rather: **These lift up their voice.** The pronoun at the beginning is emphatic and stands in contrast to the "I" of v. 16.

they shall sing, for the majesty...] Better (following the accents) **they shout: for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud, &c.** The last words *from the sea* (i.e. the Mediterranean) point to the West as the quarter whence the songs of triumph proceed. Cf. "in the coasts," v. 15.

15. The words are those of the hymn of praise from over the sea, as is shewn by the particle *Wherefore*, referring to the unexpressed cause of rejoicing.

in the fires] This gives no sense. R.V. has **in the east**; strictly "the (regions of) lights," which is the translation adopted by the majority of commentators. The idea would then be that the West calls

Even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

- 16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even* glory to the righteous.
But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously;
Yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.
- 17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare,
Are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.
- 18 And it shall come to pass, *that* he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit;
And he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare:
For the windows from on high are open,
And the foundations of the earth do shake.
- 19 The earth is utterly broken down,
The earth is clean dissolved,

on the East to join in the praise of Jehovah. But the form does not occur elsewhere and is not improbably written by mistake for "coasts," which is repeated in the next line in accordance with what is called 'the ascending rhythm.'

the LORD God of Israel] The singers, therefore, are in all probability Israelites.
in the isles] **in the coasts.**

16. Other voices *from the uttermost part* (strictly, "the skirt") of the earth are heard singing "*Glory to the righteous*," i.e. the righteous people, Israel. But these jubilant utterances of his more fortunately situated fellow-believers only extort from the prophet a cry of despair.

My leanness] Lit. "emaciation to me," hence R.V. "I pine away."
the treacherous dealers...] Cf. ch. xxi. 2, xxxiii. 1. Assonance is here carried to an extreme: "deceivers deceive, yea with deceit do deceivers deceive."

17—20. This description of the judgment on the earth and its inhabitants seems to connect immediately with v. 13.

17, 18 a recur almost verbatim in Jer. xlviii. 43 f. (cf. also Am. v. 19).

18 b—20 describe the physical convulsions which accompany the day of Jehovah.

the windows from on high are opened] An allusion to the story of the Deluge (Gen. vii. 11, viii. 2). The rest of the imagery is based on the phenomena of the earthquake.

19. *is clean dissolved*] Better, **is utterly shivered**. For *is moved* render **staggereth**.

The earth is moved exceedingly.

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard,

20

And shall be removed like a cottage;

And the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it;

And it shall fall, and not rise again.

And it shall come to pass in that day,

21

That the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones
that are on high,

And the kings of the earth upon the earth.

And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are
gathered in the pit,

And shall be shut up in the prison,

And after many days shall they be visited.

20. *reel to and fro like a drunkard*] Cf. Ps. cvii. 27.

shall be removed like a cottage] Better as in R.V. **shall be moved to and fro like a hut.** The word for "hut" is that used in ch. i. 8 of the watchman's frail shelter in the cucumber-field. It might here be fitly rendered "hammock."

the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it] The material fabric of the earth is as it were crushed beneath the accumulated guilt of its inhabitants (cf. v. 5, xxvi. 21).

it shall fall, and not rise again] Apparently a citation from Am. v. 2.

21—23. The judgment on the powers of evil, and the enthronement of Jehovah on Mount Zion.

21. *the host of the high ones that are on high*] Lit. **the host of the height in the height.** The "host of the height" is equivalent to the "host of heaven" (Jer. xxxiii. 22; 1 Kings xxii. 19; Neh. ix. 6); but (as these passages shew) the expression may be used either of the stars or of the angels. It is impossible to say which sense is intended here, or whether both are combined. That celestial beings of some kind are meant appears clearly from the emphatic contrast with the "kings of the earth" in the second half of the verse. The heavenly bodies, conceived by the ancients as animated, and as influencing the destinies of men, were objects of false worship, and so might be represented as part of the evil system of things which has to be overthrown. On the other hand the idea of patron angels of the various nationalities appears in the later literature (Dan. x. 13, 20, 21, xii. 1; Eccus. xvii. 17) and these, as mysteriously related to the earthly sovereignties, might also be thought of. (On a similar conception in Ps. lviii., lxxxii., see Cheyne's Bampton Lectures, pp. 120, 337.)

22. *after many days shall they be visited*] See Jude 6, "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (cf. 2 Pet. ii. 4); and the following passages from the book of Enoch (ch. xviii. 14, 16). "This...place...serves as a prison for the stars of heaven and the host of heaven...And he was wroth with them and bound them unto the time when their guilt should be complete in the

- 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun
ashamed,
When the LORD of hosts shall reign
In mount Zion, and in Jerusalem,
And before his ancients gloriously.

year of the secret." (See also Enoch xxi. 6.) It is true that the verb "visited" may bear a favourable sense, and many commentators prefer that sense here. But this is opposed both to the tenor of the passage and the analogy of eschatological representations.

23. *the moon shall be confounded...ashamed*] i.e. shall "pale their ineffectual fires" before the light of Jehovah's presence (see ch. lx. 19). A *punishment* of the sun and moon, as representatives of the "host of heaven," is not to be thought of. The words "moon" and "sun" are poetic, signifying respectively "the white" and "the hot." (Cf. ch. xxx. 26.)

the LORD of hosts shall reign] Lit. "hath proclaimed Himself king."
before his ancients gloriously] Render with R.V. marg. *before his ancients* (elders) *shall be glory*. There is an allusion to the Theophany seen by the seventy elders of Israel at Mount Sinai, recorded in Ex. xxiv. 9, 10. It is significant that the representatives of the redeemed community who stand nearest to Jehovah are not a king and princes, as in ch. xxxii. 1, nor priests, as in Ezekiel's Temple-vision, but a council of elders.

CH. XXV. SONGS AND PROPHECIES OF REDEMPTION.

The chapter is made up of three distinct sections:—

(1) *vv. 1—5*. A psalm of thanksgiving celebrating the downfall of some heathen city, and a signal deliverance extended to Israel.

(2) *vv. 6—8*. A prophecy of the Messianic dispensation, under the figure of a feast spread for all nations in Mount Zion. These verses are obviously the direct continuation of ch. xxiv.

(3) *vv. 9—12*. Another hymn of praise, composed in prospect of the extinction of Moab.

The occurrence of lyrical outbursts such as (1) and (3) constitutes one of the critical problems presented by this difficult prophecy. Two views are possible. (a) These passages (and others of a similar character) may belong to the original plan of the work, and may have been introduced by the author himself to mark the various stages in the great drama which unfolds itself before his prophetic vision. In this case we must suppose that he assumes an ideal stand-point in the future, from which he expresses the emotions of those who shall look back on the fulfilment of his predictions. Or, (b) they may be independent compositions which have been inserted in the text by an editor or scribe. (See the Concluding Note, p. 203.)

1—5. The writer of the psalm, speaking in the name of the believing community, praises God for His wonderful providence (*v. 1*) manifested

O LORD, thou *art* my God; 25
 I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name;
 For thou hast done wonderful things;
Thy counsels of old *are* faithfulness *and* truth.
 For thou hast made of a city a heap; 2
Of a defenced city a ruin:
 A palace of strangers to be no city;
 It shall never be built.
 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, 3
 The city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.
 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, 4
 A strength to the needy in his distress,
 A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat,

in the overthrow of Israel's enemies (2, 3) and in the mercy vouchsafed to the nation in a time of trouble (4, 5).

1. The first half of the verse recalls in every phrase the language of the Psalter. Cf. Ps. lxiii. 1, cxlv. 1, cxxxviii. 2, liv. 6, cxviii. 28.

thou hast done wonderful things] as Ex. xv. 11; Ps. lxxvii. 14, lxxviii. 12. These "wonders" are the execution (in the recent experience of the nation) of *counsels of old*; i.e. purposes long since conceived and revealed. The last clause is perhaps to be translated: (even) **counsels from afar in faithfulness and fidelity**.

2. The fall of a hostile city. The word "city" can hardly in this case be understood collectively, although the terms of the description are too vague to shew what historic city is intended. All that appears is that it is a city which, in the age of the prophet, symbolised the hostility of the world to the kingdom of God; its identification will depend on the date assigned to the prophecy. If for instance the author lived during or shortly after the Exile, the "defenced city" would be most naturally identified with Babylon (see however on the next verse).

a palace of strangers] Better, **of aliens** (as in ch. i. 7).

3. The effect of this judgment on the heathen world. The probable rendering is, **Therefore (many) a strong people shall glorify Thee, (many) a city of terrible nations shall fear Thee**. If a single city were meant we should have a *second* representative centre of heathenism, alongside of the "city" of v. 2, and the view that Babylon is there referred to could no longer be maintained. It is easier, however, on account of the following plurals (in the Heb. "fear" is pl.), to understand the word here in a collective sense.

4, 5. Its happy consequences for Israel. The "for" may refer back to v. 1 or to v. 3; in either case the judgment on the oppressive city is regarded as a signal proof of Jehovah's protecting care over His people.

For *strength* render **stronghold**, as in R.V.

When the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm
against the wall.

- 5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers,
As the heat in a dry place;
Even the heat with the shadow of a cloud:
The branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.
6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make
unto all people
A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well
refined.

when the blast...wall] Lit., "for the blast of the terrible ones is as rain of a wall." The construction is too condensed to be natural. A better rendering would be "as rain of winter" (reading *qôr* for *qlr*). But the whole clause is justly suspected by some critics of being agloss, on account of its prosaic character, and its doubtful appropriateness in the context.

5. Render: As heat in a dry place (cf. xxxii. 2) Thou humblest the pride of aliens; (as) heat by the shadow of a cloud the song of the tyrants is brought low. The meaning is that as natural heat, however intense, is abated by an intervening cloud, so Jehovah has means of bringing to an end the fiercest oppression to which His people can be exposed.

6—8. This section attaches itself directly to the concluding thought of ch. xxiv. The feast of v. 6 may be regarded as a coronation-festival, inaugurating the reign of Jehovah on Mount Zion (xxiv. 23), although of course the state of things which is thus symbolised is not transitory but eternal. What is signified is the admission of all nations to communion with the one true God, and, as a consequence of this, the cessation of all the evils of human life. The whole passage, standing out as it does from a gloomy background of judgment and terror, is one of the most remarkable and fascinating in the Old Testament.

6. *in this mountain*] Mount Zion (cf. xxiv. 23), shewing that the author lived in Jerusalem.

a feast (lit. "banquet") *of fat things...full of marrow*] The fat parts of the animal, which in ordinary sacrifice were reserved for the deity, were regarded in the East as the choicest delicacy. The same image is used in Ps. xxxvi. 8, lxiii. 5 of the highest spiritual enjoyment in fellowship with God.

wines on the lees well refined] i.e. wine that has been left to stand long on its sediment, in order that its strength, flavour, *bouquet*, &c., might be enhanced by repeated fermentation (cf. Jer. xlviii. 11; Zeph. i. 12). Such old wines had to be strained before being used; hence the expression "well-refined" in E.V. The choice of terms in the Hebr. is partly dictated by the assonances: *fat things* corresponding to *wines on the lees*, and *full of marrow* to *well refined*. For the image of the

And he will destroy in this mountain
The face of the covering cast over all people,
And the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death in victory;
And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all
faces;
And the rebuke of his people shall he take away from
off all the earth :

feast as an emblem of the blessings of the kingdom of God cf. ch. lv. 1, 2; Ps. xxiii. 5; Matt. viii. 11, xxii. 2 ff.; Luke xiv. 15 ff.; Rev. xix. 9.

7. *the face of the covering...nations*] More literally: **the surface of the veil that veils all the peoples, and the covering that is woven over all the nations.** The phrase "surface of the veil" is peculiar, but a similar expression is found in Job xli. 13. It is probably to be explained as gen. of apposition—"the veil-surface." The veil is not, as might be supposed, a symbol of spiritual blindness (2 Cor. iii. 14 ff.), but of sorrow; the figure being taken from the practice of covering the head in token of mourning (see 2 Sam. xv. 30, xix. 4; Jer. xiv. 3, 4; Esth. vi. 12). The prophet has already spoken of the profound wretchedness in which the world is plunged (ch. xxiv. 7—12).

8. *He will swallow up...victory*] Rather: **He hath abolished death for ever.** Cf. 2 Tim. i. 10. The A.V. follows the rendering of St Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 54 (*κατεπύθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκης*), but "swallow up" is needlessly literal, and "in victory" comes from the apostle's familiarity with Aramaic. The sense, of course, is correctly given. The words contain the clearest expression of the hope of immortality to be found in the prophetic writings. The special contribution of prophecy to that doctrine is reached through the conception of the abolition of death as a hindrance to the perfect blessedness of the Messianic age. Although the prophets rarely touch on this theme, we can see that it was only by degrees and at a late period that the idea of immortal life became an element in their conception of the kingdom of God. The first step towards it was the anticipation of a great extension of human life, as in Zech. viii. 4; Is. lxxv. 20, 22. From this to the belief in an absolute annihilation of death is no doubt a great advance, but the advance is made in the passage before us. It might be questioned if the resurrection of those who had fallen asleep before the advent of the Messianic kingdom is here contemplated; but since that doctrine is clearly taught in the next chapter (v. 19), the question has little importance.

and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears...]—the traces of past sorrow. "When Jehovah removes the veil he sees the tears and wipes them away" (Duhm). Perhaps no words that ever were uttered have sunk deeper into the aching heart of humanity than this exquisite image of the Divine tenderness; cf. Rev. xxi. 4.

the rebuke (render, **reproach**) *of his people...earth*] a reversal of the doom pronounced in Deut. xxviii. 37. The later Jews keenly felt their

- For the LORD hath spoken *it*.
 9 And it shall be said in that day,
 Lo, this *is* our God;
 We have waited for him, and he will save us:
 This *is* the LORD; we have waited for him,
 We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.
 10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest,
 And Moab shall be trodden down under him,
Even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.
 11 And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of
 them,
 As he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to
 swim:

accumulated national misfortunes as a religious disgrace, a reflection on the power of their God; Joel ii. 17; Ps. xlv. 14 ff., lxxix. 10, &c. Comp. with this passage, Zeph. iii. 18 ff.

9—12. The humiliation of Moab. The heading in v. 9 marks this as a distinct section. It might indeed be supposed, from the phrase "in this mountain" in v. 10, and the use of future tenses in 10—12, that the song of praise ends with v. 9 and that 10—12 are the continuation of v. 8. But this is unlikely. The express naming of Moab is not in the manner of the main apocalyptic prophecy, while to take Moab as a symbolic name for the enemies of God in general is hazardous, as being opposed to Old Testament usage. The violent contrast between the spirit of vv. 6—8 and that of vv. 10—12 rather favours the supposition that the latter was a separate composition. In any event, we must assume that so passionate an outburst of indignation against Moab was called forth by some special circumstance, although it is not possible to connect it with any known historic occasion.

9. *Lo, this is our God...save us*] Or, **Behold our God on whom we have hoped that he should save us.** So in the next clause: **on whom we have hoped.**

10. The fate of Moab is contrasted with that of Israel. It is as if one hand of Jehovah rested lightly and protectingly on Zion while the other crushes and extinguishes Moab.

under him] means "under himself," i.e. in the place where he (Moab) stands.

for the dunghill] R.V. **in the water of the dunghill** rightly follows the consonantal text in opposition to the Massoretic tradition. But it should have at the same time substituted "dung-pit" for "dunghill." This word (*madmēnāh*) is perhaps a play on the name Madmen (Jer. xlviii. 2); it also resembles the word for "straw" (*mathbēn*).

11. The figure of Moab trying to swim in the dung-pit is sufficiently graphic, if somewhat repulsive.

in the midst of them] should be (as in R.V.) **in the midst thereof**, i.e. of the dung-pit, although there is an *enallage generis*.

And he shall bring down their pride
 Together with the spoils of their hands.
 And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he ¹²
 bring down,
 Lay low, *and* bring to the ground, *even* to the dust.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of 26
 Judah ;
 We have a strong city ;

and he (Jehovah) shall bring down his pride] See on ch. xvi. 6.
together with the spoils of their hands] Perhaps: **in spite of the wiles
 of his hands.** The expression is strange.

12. *the fortress...walls*] Better perhaps, **the towering fortification
 of thy walls.** This verse has suggested the identification of the city
 of xxv. 2, xxvi. 5 f. with a city of Moab. The expressions of the verse
 are certainly remarkably parallel to those of xxvi. 5, to which Duhm
 thinks that it was a marginal variant. Other commentators also have
 surmised that it is misplaced.

shall he bring down, &c.] R.V. more literally, **hath he brought
 down, &c.** The perfects, however, may be those of certainty.

CH. XXVI. 1—19. THE NATION'S PRAYER FOR A MORE COMPLETE SALVATION.

(1) *vv. 1—6.* The nation praises God for the strength and safety of
 Jerusalem, henceforth to be the dwelling place of a righteous, truth-
 keeping people (1, 2); for the steadfast faith which is now rewarded
 with peace (3, 4), and for the overthrow of a proud hostile city (5, 6).

(2) *vv. 7—10.* The enthusiasm of the opening verses here gives
 place to a more subdued and wistful mood. Israel still waits with
 ardent longing for the accomplishment of Jehovah's judgments (8, 9 a),
 knowing well that only by the discipline of judgment will the inhabitants
 of the world learn righteousness (9 b, 10).

(3) *vv. 11—15.* Meditation passes into prayer,—first for the destruc-
 tion of enemies (11), then for peace to Israel (12 a); and this again into
 a retrospect of the past history of the nation, in which the writer thank-
 fully recognises tokens of the Divine presence and help (12 b). Much
 has been achieved; foreign tyrants have been swept away (13, 14), the
 people has been increased and its territory extended (15).

(4) *vv. 16—18.* But the past has its failures also, and the effect of
 them is felt in the present. Israel has learned prayer through severe
 discipline (16); yet how vain and ineffectual have all its pain and effort
 been! (17, 18). And apparently the chief source of disappointment is
 the scantiness of the population that remains on the eve of the final
 glory.

(5) *v. 19.* The last verse comes on us almost with a shock of sur-
 prise, so far does it seem to exceed the aspiration to which it is the

- Salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks.
- 2 Open ye the gates,
That the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may
enter in.
- 3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on thee:
Because he trusteth in thee.

answer. It is a promise of life from the dead in the most literal sense, a resurrection of those members of the community whom death had seemed to rob of their share in the hope of Israel.

It is difficult to interpret the situation which gave rise to this deeply interesting meditation. The nation has emerged from a season of great trouble and oppression, and gratefully acknowledges the mercies it now enjoys, but this feeling is accompanied by confession of failure and an eager longing for a fuller experience of the Divine blessing. Such a state of mind is in itself perfectly intelligible; the difficulty is that it is hardly appropriate to the ideal future standpoint to which the psalm is assigned by the heading. "In that day"—the day of Jehovah's kingdom—the praises of Israel must surely rise higher than the sombre and almost melancholy strains that appear in the latter part of this poem. Yet it seems impossible to regard the passage as other than a unity. The verse-connexion is as a rule very close, and just at those points where some critics have recognised a discontinuity in the thought (e.g. after v. 7, or v. 10 or v. 16) the phraseology presents indications of a studied transition. The poem indeed is remarkable for its *concatenated* structure; that is to say, a word or idea is taken up from one verse and suggests a new thought for the next (vv. 2 f., 3 f., 7 f., 8 f., 9 f., 10 f., 17 f.). Partly from this peculiarity it is difficult to trace all the windings of the thought; and clearly defined sections do not exist.

1, 2. These verses might almost have been written for a dedication of the fortifications of Jerusalem. Cf. Ps. xlviii. 12 f.

1. *salvation will God appoint...bulwarks*] Two interpretations are possible: (a) "Salvation will He appoint in place of walls and moat" (see below), implying that Jerusalem has no material defences, but only the supernatural protection ("salvation") assured by Jehovah (as Ps. cxxv. 2; Zech. ii. 4, 5). (b) "He appoints for salvation (her) walls and moat" (as ch. lx. 18). The choice depends on whether Jerusalem is or is not conceived as a fortified city. Since "gates" are mentioned in the next verse, (b) seems more suitable. The word for *bulwarks* (a sing.) is usually understood to mean a low outer wall separated by some space from the wall proper (τεῖχος καὶ περίτειχος in the LXX.); other authorities think it means a ditch or *glacis*.

2. Comp. Ps. cxviii. 19, 20; Rev. xxii. 14. "Truth" here means "troth," fidelity (Deut. xxxii. 20).

3. A stricter rendering might be: A steadfast disposition thou guardest in constant peace (lit. "peace, peace"), for it is trustful towards thee (see R.V. marg.). The word for "disposition" is else-

Trust ye in the LORD for ever: 4
 For in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:
 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; 5
 The lofty city, he layeth it low;
 He layeth it low, *even* to the ground;
 He bringeth it *even* to the dust.
 The foot shall tread it down, 6
Even the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy.
 The way of the just *is* uprightness: 7
 Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.
 Yea, *in* the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we 8
 waited for thee;
 The desire of *our* soul *is* to thy name, and to the
 remembrance of thee.

where translated "imagination" (e.g. Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21). Literally it means a "thing formed" (as in ch. xxix. 16), and thus may be used tropically either of that which is formed by the mind (imagination) or (as here) of the constitution of the mind itself,—the inclination or character.

4. *for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength*] Render: for Yah Yahveh (see on xii. 2) is an everlasting Rock (lit. "a Rock of Ages"). The preposition *in* may be omitted in English (*Bêth essentialæ*).

5, 6. Jehovah has proved himself to be a Rock by the destruction of "the lofty city"; see on ch. xxv. 2. The principal pause in v. 5 should be after the word "city."

6. The *poor* and *needy* are the Jews, as in ch. xxv. 4. The oppressed triumph over their oppressors. But that they are actually the instruments of Jehovah's vengeance on the "lofty city" is not necessarily implied.

7, 8. That the way of the righteous is made straight by Jehovah, is a fundamental principle of religion (Prov. iii. 6, xv. 19, &c.), but the principle is upheld only by Jehovah moving in His own way of judgment; therefore the "righteous nation" has waited impatiently for His judicial interposition.

7. The verse should probably be read: The way of the righteous is straightness; the path of the righteous Thou directest straight. The "way" of the righteous is here not his inward life-purpose, but his outward lot. *dost weigh*] lit. "levellest"; as in Prov. iv. 26, v. 6, 21 (R.V.).

8. *Yea, in the way...for thee*] i.e. have stood by the way along which we expected and desired Jehovah to appear—in judgment. The rest of the verse should be translated as in R.V., to thy name and to thy memorial is the desire of [our] soul (or, as Cheyne, "heart-felt desire"). "Name" and "memorial" are synonymous, as in Ex. iii. 15; Ps. cxxxv. 13; Jehovah's memorial is that by which He makes Himself to be remembered (see v. 13).

- 9 *With* my soul have I desired thee in the night;
 Yea, *with* my spirit within me will I seek thee early:
 For when thy judgments *are* in the earth,
 The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.
- 10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, *yet* will he not
 learn righteousness:
 In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly,
 And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
- 11 LORD, *when* thy hand is lifted up, they will not see:
But they shall see, and be ashamed for *their* envy at
 the people;
 Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.
- 12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us:
 For thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

9. The first half of the verse completes the thought of v. 8; the second is linked to v. 10. The speaker is the individualised community. *will I seek thee early*] Rather, **I seek thee earnestly**.

9b, 10. The motive of this eager longing for judgment is the conviction that only by this method can the world be brought to the practice of righteousness.

10. *the wicked* probably includes both the heathen and the apostate Israelite.

the land of uprightness is the Holy Land; even there, surrounded by the institutions of a pure religion, the wicked outrages the dictates of morality, having no eyes for the majesty of Jehovah.

11. To the eye of faith the lifting up of Jehovah's hand has been manifest in the recent history of Israel, but, as in Isaiah's time, there are some who "regard not the work of Jehovah nor see the operation of his hands" (ch. v. 12); and for them further judgments are necessary. The first part of the verse is a categorical statement: **Jehovah, thy hand hath been lifted up, [yet] they see not.**

but they shall see...people] Lit., **Let them see (and be ashamed) [thy] jealousy for the people**; i.e. "let them be put to shame when they see, &c." The clause "and be ashamed" is a parenthesis, separating the verb from its object. "Jealousy for the people" is gen. of the obj., as Ps. lxi. 9. For the idea cf. Zeph. i. 18; Ez. xxxvi. 5. Similarly, *the fire of thine enemies* means "the fire (reserved) for thine enemies."

12. *thou wilt ordain*] or "mayest thou ordain." *peace for us*] cf. v. 3.

for thou also hast wrought...] Better: **for even our whole work thou hast wrought for us**; all that we have achieved—inadequate though it be (see v. 17)—has been due to thy working for us. A similar thought underlies the prayer of Ps. xc. 16, 17, where the manifestation of Jehovah's work is equivalent to His establishing the work of Israel's hands.

O LORD our God,
Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: 13
But by thee only will we make mention of thy name.
They are dead, they shall not live; 14
They are deceased, they shall not rise:
Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to perish.
Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, 15
Thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified:
Thou hadst removed *it* far *unto* all the ends of the
earth.

13, 14. The long heathen domination is now a thing of the past; the oppressors have gone to the realm of shades, and shall trouble the world no more.

13. *other lords besides thee*] That the reference is to foreign despotisms, and not as some have thought to false gods, may be regarded as certain. The rule of the heathen over the people of God was an invasion of Jehovah's sovereignty, it was inconsistent with the ideal of the Theocracy, and hindered the perfect realisation of the Divine will in the national life.

by thee only...name] The sense appears to be: "it is through thy help alone that we can now celebrate thy name." The construction is not very clear.

14. Render: **The dead shall not live, the Shades** (*Rēphā'īm*, as in xiv. 9) **shall not rise**, &c. In the form of a general proposition the writer expresses Israel's sense of security with regard to those "other lords" who have now vanished from the earth. The idea is probably suggested by ch. xiv. 9 ff. There is no contradiction between this verse and v. 19, nor is there any evidence of a merely nascent belief in the possibility of a resurrection; because the subjects in the two verses are different. The resurrection of v. 19 is distinctly represented as miraculous, and is limited to members of the covenant people; over those who are unvisited by the life-giving "dew" of Jehovah, the sway of death is absolute.

therefore...] i.e. in token that they shall never reappear, all traces of their supremacy have been obliterated.

all their memory] **every memorial of them.**

15. *Thou hast increased the nation*] Probably an allusion to ch. ix. 3. There is no justification for taking the perfects here as prophetic perfects, or for understanding them in a precative sense. A real increase of the nation and its territory is regarded as already effected; this is one of the successes which Jehovah has wrought for His people.

thou art glorified] **thou hast glorified thyself**,—by thus exalting Israel.

thou hadst removed...earth] Render with R.V., **thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.**

- 16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee,
They poured out a prayer *when* thy chastening *was*
upon them.
- 17 Like as a woman with child, *that* draweth near the
time of her delivery,
Is in pain, *and* crieth out in her pangs;
So have we been in thy sight, O LORD.
- 18 We have been with child, we have been in pain,
We have as it were brought forth wind;

16—18. The poet plunges abruptly into a train of reflection on the depressing side of the nation's experience.

16. *in trouble* ("distress" or "straits," as ch. xxv. 4) *have they visited thee*] i.e. sought after thee. The verb might also mean "missed thee"—felt their need of thee. This was no doubt a spiritual gain, but the author's complaint is that so little outward benefit has accrued from the nation's discipline of sorrow.

they poured out...upon them] A difficult clause. The rendering of A.V. (and R.V.) is perhaps the best that can be made of the received text, but it can hardly be defended. The root-meaning of the word for "prayer" is "whisper," but in usage it is confined to the sense of "enchantment." It is questionable if it could mean "whispered prayer," although the cognate verb in 2 Sam. xii. 19 and Ps. xli. 7 might be appealed to in support of this view. Moreover, the verbal form "they poured out" is anomalous, and the syntax of "when thy chastisement was upon them" is at least hard. The only alternative translation that requires notice is that of Koppe (adopted by several good commentators): "the binding of a spell was thy chastisement unto them," i.e. it acted on them with the potency of a spell. The construction there is easy enough and the textual change is only in the vowel-points; but the noun "binding" ("pressure") does not occur, and the simile is perhaps too bold.

17. The agony of the crisis is compared to the pangs of a woman in travail,—a common figure, Hos. xiii. 13; Mic. iv. 10, &c.

in thy sight] Or, **because of thee**—Thy chastening hand.

18. Retaining the figure the prophet dwells on the abortive issue of the nation's prayers and sufferings. In the last clause he seems even to give the figure a closer application. For that sentence is no doubt to be read as in R.V. marg., **neither have inhabitants of the world been born**; i.e. the mother-nation has brought forth no children to people the world. This sense of the verb "fall" is not found elsewhere in Hebr., but it occurs in Arabic (cf. also the Greek *πίπτειν* and Latin *cadere*); and here it is demanded by the last clause of v. 19. The complaint (of an insufficient population) seems at first inconsistent with v. 15, but the discrepancy belongs to the conflict of feeling which runs through the poem; a certain degree of prosperity has been attained, but not complete and final salvation. It is certainly difficult to imagine such a complaint projected on the ideal horizon of the future. A disappoint-

We have not wrought any deliverance *in* the earth;
Neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

Thy dead *men* shall live,
Together with my dead body shall they arise.
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust:
For thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

19

ment so peculiar must be begotten of actual experience. Comp. ch. lxvi. 7—9.

we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth] Lit. "we do not make the land salvations"; i.e. we cannot with all our exertions bring about a condition of freedom, prosperity, peace, &c.

19. The answer to these utterances of disappointed hopes is the promise of the Resurrection. The speaker throughout is the community, and the words are addressed to God, with the exception of an apostrophe to the buried Israelites in the middle of the verse. There is indeed no decisive argument against the view of those who think that the first half of the verse expresses the longing of the nation for the restoration of its dead ("May thy dead live, &c."), and the second the triumphant assurance of the prophet that the prayer shall be fulfilled. But it is more probable that the language throughout is that of confident belief and hope.

Thy dead...arise] Render with R.V., **Thy dead shall live, my dead bodies** (collect. in Hebr.) **shall arise**. The dead saints are at once Jehovah's dead and Israel's.

for thy dew is as the dew of herbs] Better, **for a dew of lights is thy dew** (O Jehovah). Comp. James i. 17. The word means "herbs" in 2 Ki. iv. 39, but the idea is too prosaic for this passage. It is a heavenly, supernatural, dew that is meant; as soon as this falls on the dead they awake to life. Duhamel refers to a Talmudic representation of a dew kept in the seventh heaven which is to descend on the bones of the dead and quicken them into life. "Light" and "life" are frequently and naturally associated: Ps. xxxvi. 9, lvi. 13; Job iii. 20, xxxiii. 30; John i. 4.

the earth shall cast out the dead] Render: **the earth** (or **the land**) **shall bring forth shades** (v. 14). The verb is lit. "cause to fall," but obviously in the sense explained under v. 18.

The doctrine of the resurrection here presented is reached through the conviction, gradually produced by the long process of revelation, that the final redemption of Israel could not be accomplished within the limits of nature. It became clear that the hopes and aspirations engendered by the Spirit in believing minds pointed forward to the great miracle here described, and thus the belief in the resurrection was firmly bound up with the indestructible hopes of the future of Israel (cf. Rom. xi. 15). The idea is exhibited in a form which is immature in the light of New Testament teaching, but it practically represents the highest

- 20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers,
And shut thy doors about thee:
Hide thyself as it were for a little moment,
Until the indignation be overpast.
- 21 For behold, the LORD cometh out of his place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity:
The earth also shall disclose her blood,
And shall no more cover her slain.

development of Old Testament revelation on this subject. The only passage which is slightly in advance of this is Dan. xii. 2, and even there a universal resurrection is not taught. Here the hope is restricted to Israelites (see v. 14) and no doubt to those Israelites who had departed this life in the faith and fear of God. On the other hand, the teaching of this verse is quite different from such passages as Hos. vi. 2; Ez. xxxvii. 1—14. There rising from the dead is but a figurative clothing of the idea of national regeneration, whereas there can be no doubt that here a literal resurrection of individuals is foretold.

CH. XXVI. 20—XXVII. 13. THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROPHECY.

v. 20 resumes the connexion of the prophetic discourse, interrupted since xxv. 8; and this continues to the end, broken only by the lyrical passage, xxvii. 2—6. The contents, however, are of a somewhat mixed character, and the divisions are clearly marked.

(1) xxvi. vv. 20, 21.—A call to the people of God to hide themselves till the indignation be overpast.

(2) xxvii. v. 1.—Announcement of judgment on the great World-powers.

(3) vv. 2—6.—A song of Jehovah concerning His vineyard.

(4) vv. 7—11.—The moderation displayed in Jehovah's chastisement of Israel, and the lesson to be learned from it.

(5) vv. 12, 13.—A prophecy of the restoration of the dispersed of Israel.

20, 21. The storm of judgment is about to burst on the world, but it will be of short duration; let the people seclude themselves in the privacy of their chambers and wait for a glorious salvation (cf. Zeph. ii. 3; Dan. xii. 13).

20. *enter...and shut thy doors about thee*] Matt. vi. 6. There is nothing, however, to suggest that the words here are a summons to secret prayer. *until the indignation be overpast*] Job xiv. 13; Dan. xi. 36.

21. *the LORD is coming forth* (fut. instans) *out of his place*] i.e. heaven. Cf. Mic. i. 3.

the earth also...blood] Uncovered blood cries for vengeance (Gen. iv. 11; Ez. xxiv. 7, 8); and the earth, by drinking in innocent blood, seems to conspire with the murderer, by concealing his guilt. Comp. Job's impassioned cry in xvi. 18.

shall no more cover her slain] The idea here is the same: the

In that day the LORD with his sore and great and 27
strong sword

Shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent,
Even leviathan *that* crooked serpent;
And he shall slay the dragon that *is* in the sea.

In that day sing ye unto her,

earth will expose the dead bodies as evidence against the persecutors. It is at least doubtful if there is any thought of actual resurrection.

1. The judgment on the ungodly powers of this world, is represented symbolically as the destruction of three living monsters by the sword of Jehovah. It is disputed whether the reference is to the world-power in general, or to a single Empire, or to three separate Empires. Assuming that they are distinct the "Dragon that is in the sea" is almost certainly an emblem of Egypt (ch. li. 9; Ez. xxix. 3, xxxii. 2; Ps. lxxiv. 13). To the reference of the other two we have no key. It is of the essence of apocalyptic symbolism to be obscure; and it will always be possible, at any date, to find representatives, more or less suitable, of the three creatures. If the prophet wrote during or soon after the Exile they might denote Assyria and Babylonia; if at a later period, perhaps Babylonia and Persia, or even Persia and Greece.

For the *sword* of Jehovah cf. ch. xxxiv. 5, 6, lxvi. 16; Deut. xxxii. 41 f.; Ezek. xxi. 4, 5, 9 ff., &c. For *sore* render **hard**.

leviathan] The word apparently means "twisted," and is originally an epithet for the serpent. Although applied (probably) in Job xli. to the crocodile, it is no doubt mythological in its origin, denoting (like our "dragon") a fabulous monster figuring largely in popular legends. It is so used in Job iii. 8 and perhaps Ps. civ. 26; as a political symbol in Ps. lxxiv. 14 and here.

the piercing serpent] **the fugitive serpent**. The phrase occurs in Job xxvi. 13, where we have the wide-spread myth of the dragon that devours the sun (in eclipses, &c.). See Dr Davidson's *Job*, p. 20. How this astronomical dragon came to be specially connected with any political power we cannot tell; but we find an analogous case in the word Rahab as a symbol for Egypt (see on ch. xxx. 7).

even leviathan that crooked serpent] Render: **and Leviathan the tortuous serpent**.

the dragon that is in the sea] The *sea* means here the Nile, as often: see on xix. 5.

2—6. The song of the vineyard,—the counterpart of ch. v. 1 ff. This peculiar and perplexing passage has little relation to the context. It seems to fall into two stanzas; the first (vv. 2—4 a) expresses Jehovah's satisfaction in his vineyard (the Theocratic nation), the second (vv. 4 b—5, which however is obscure) states what He would do if it should again be injured by wicked men. v. 6 forms an appendix.

2. The verse probably runs thus: **In that day—"Pleasant vine-**

A vineyard of red wine.

- 3 I the LORD do keep it;
I will water it every moment:
Lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.
- 4 Fury *is* not in me:
Who would set the briers *and* thorns against me in battle?
I would go through them, I would burn them together.
- 5 Or let him take hold of my strength,
That he may make peace with me;
And he shall make peace with me.
- 6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root:

yard! Sing ye of it." The introductory formula (cf. ch. xxv. 9, xxvi. 1) is here curtailed to the bare note of time, "In that day"; the song itself begins with the words "Pleasant vineyard." This is preferable to making the last expression a part of the introduction. The construction of the A.V. is opposed to the order of words in the original.

A vineyard of red wine] The reading here (*kerem hemer*) is that of the majority of MSS. But a few MSS. (and indeed the common printed editions), as well as the LXX. and Targ., have *kerem hemed* ("pleasant vineyard"), and this as yielding the best sense is generally adopted by commentators. For the phrase see Am. v. 11.

3. *do keep it*] Better: **am its keeper**. For *I will water...I will keep*, substitute **I water...I keep**.

4. *Fury is not in me*] Or, **wrath have I none**. These words naturally go with the first stanza, expressing, as they seem to do, Jehovah's contentment with the condition of His vineyard.

who would set...battle] The phrase "Who will give?" is the well known Hebrew equivalent of the Latin *utinam*, "Would that!" Hence the R.V.: **O that the briers and thorns were against me in battle!**

briers and thorns] (ch. v. 6) must here mean heathen intruders. The next clause reads as in R.V.: **I would march upon them**. Cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 6f.

5. *Or let him take hold, &c.*] Else must he take hold of my strength: lit. "my stronghold" or asylum: cf. 1 Kings i. 50, ii. 28. The figure is relinquished; the idea expressed being that unconditional surrender to Jehovah on the part of the ungodly is the only alternative to his annihilation.

The two last clauses **let him make peace...** differ only in the order of words, and should be translated alike (see R.V.).

6. The verse is attached to the song, but forms no integral part of it. It reads as in R.V.: **In days to come shall Jacob take root, &c.** By a unique ellipsis the word "days" is omitted in the original; hence the mistaken rendering of A.V., "them that come."

Israel shall blossom and bud,
And fill the face of the world *with* fruit.

Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote ⁷
him?

Or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that
are slain by him?

In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate ⁸
with it:

He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east
wind.

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; ⁹

and fill the face of the world with fruit] For a contrast see ch. xiv. 21. The fruitfulness anticipated belongs to the sphere of temporal prosperity, —teeming population, &c.

7—11. A summons to national repentance and reformation. Has Israel suffered the extremity of Divine punishment as its oppressors have done (7)? There is a ground of hope in the moderation displayed by Jehovah in His chastisement of Israel; the prospect of ultimate reconciliation is held out; and this hope will be realised when all the monuments of idolatry are erased from the land (9). At present the city lies desolate, a witness to the sinful blindness of the people and the estrangement of its Creator (10, 11). The section is full of difficulties. The words of v. 8 stand in no obvious relation to the context, and are probably to be regarded (with Duhm) as a marginal gloss to v. 10. The connexion between v. 9 and v. 10 is also somewhat obscure.

7. For the thought cf. Jer. x. 24, 25. The interrogations imply, of course, a negative answer; Jehovah has *not* smitten Israel as He has those that smote it. In the second question the reading of LXX. and Peshito is to be preferred on account of the parallelism: **hath he been slain according to the slaughter of those that slew him** (Israel).

8. A very difficult verse. The first word in the Hebr. is supposed to be a contracted reduplication of *šāh* (the third part of an ephah); hence “by seah and seah” = “in exact measure,” “dealing out punishment in carefully adjusted quantities” (Cheyne and Kay). But this cannot be right. A better, though still precarious, sense is reached by the help of a word (*sa’sa’a*) which the Arabs use in driving animals. The first half of the verse would thus read: **By driving her forth, by sending her away, thou contendest with her** (i.e. Israel). The allusion is to the Exile, and perhaps the figure may be that of a divorced wife. The last clause reads: **he hath removed (her) with his rough blast in a day of east wind** (nearly as R.V.).

9. The condition of restoration and forgiveness. *Therefore* points back to the idea of v. 7—the moderation of Israel’s punishment,—while *By this*, i.e. (“on this condition”) points forward to the end of the verse, the removal of idolatrous emblems.

be purged] **be expiated** (R.V. marg.).

- And this *is* all the fruit to take away his sin;
 When he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones
 that are beaten in sunder,
 The groves and images shall not stand up.
 10 Yet the defenced city *shall be* desolate,
And the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness:
 There shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down,
 And consume the branches thereof.
 11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be
 broken off:
 The women come, *and* set them on fire:
 For it *is* a people of no understanding:
 Therefore he that made them will not have mercy on
 them,
 And he that formed them will shew them no favour.
 12 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the
 river unto the stream of Egypt,

and this is all...sin] Better: **and this is the whole fruit of the taking away of his sin.** "Fruit" seems here to mean contemplated or expected issue,—*"the aim."*

when he maketh all the stones of the altar] Rather, **that he should make all altar-stones, &c.**

the groves and images, &c.] or, **the Asherim and sun-pillars** (see on xvii. 8) **shall not remain standing.**

10, 11. A picture of the desolation of Jerusalem, and the explanation of it. The commoner view is that the same hostile city as in xxv. 2, xxvi. 5 is referred to, but the latter part of v. 11 must refer to Israel. A partial parallel is found in ch. xlii. 19 ff.

10. *Yet the defenced city...*] Render with R.V.: **For the defenced city is solitary, an habitation deserted** (lit. "expelled") **and forsaken, &c.** The verbs throughout are in the present tense.

11. *women come, and set them on fire]* i.e. come thither to gather fuel.

a people of no understanding] (lit. "not a people of discernment") because it does not perceive that deliverance is delayed solely by its continued impenitence (ch. xliv. 18).

12, 13. The return from Exile,—a prophecy of the same character as ch. xi. 11—16.

12. *the LORD shall beat off...Egypt]* Rather: **Jehovah shall thresh out from the corn-ears of the River** (the Euphrates) **unto** (those of) **the brook of Egypt**, i.e. all that grows between those limits. The term "beat out" is applied both to the beating of olives from the tree (Deut. xxiv. 20) and to the beating out of grain with a staff—a more careful process than the ordinary methods (xxviii. 27; Jud. vi. 11).

And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

And it shall come to pass in that day,

That the great trumpet shall be blown,

And they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria,

And the outcasts in the land of Egypt,

And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

13

The latter analogy gives the best sense here. The "brook of Egypt" is the *Wadi el Arish*, the south-western frontier of Palestine, this and the Euphrates being the extreme boundaries of the ideal territory of Israel (Gen. xv. 18, &c.). The meaning is that within this territory Jehovah will carefully separate the corn from the chaff and straw,—the true Israelites from heathens and apostates. v. 13 then describes, under another figure, the ingathering of those who were exiled beyond these limits.

13. *the (a) great trumpet*] Cf. ch. xviii. 3; Zech. ix. 14; Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16.

they...which were ready to perish] **the lost ones.**

outcasts] Cf. ch. xi. 12.

CONCLUDING NOTE ON CH. XXIV.—XXVII.

The above exposition has left some general questions in suspense; and for the most part they are such as cannot be adequately discussed in this commentary. There are two, however, on which a few additional observations are necessary, viz., (1) the unity and (2) the date, of the prophecy.

(1) The question of *unity*, as raised by the recent criticisms of Duhm and Cheyne, relates principally to the lyrical passages already marked off in the notes (xxv. 1—5, 9—12, xxvi. 1—19, xxvii. 2—6), although it is acknowledged that the section xxvii. 7—11 presents difficulties almost as great. As has been hinted above, the commonly accepted view has been that the lyrics represent flights of the author's imagination, depicting the feelings of the redeemed community after the great judgment is past. The chief considerations urged against this view are as follows. (a) If we read consecutively xxiv., xxv. 6—8, xxvi. 20—xxvii. 1, 7—13, we have a series of conceptions which readily fit into a consistent picture of the future, and (at least up to xxvii. 1) a very natural sequence of thought. (b) the songs are distinguished from the main prophecy in poetic structure and rhythm, as well as in the point of view they represent. (c) They do not occur at places where their insertion would be natural if due to the literary plan of the composition, while one of them (xxv. 1—5) appears to interrupt a close connexion of thought. (d) The most important of all (xxvi. 1—19) is written in a vein of mingled exultation and despondency inappropriate to the

supposed situation. Although the reader is naturally averse to entertaining the idea of interpolation if it can possibly be avoided, it can hardly be denied that these arguments have a considerable cumulative force. (b) counts for little or nothing by itself, while the others may involve merely subjective differences of critical judgment. The crucial case is probably (d), where the 'ideal standpoint' theory could only be maintained by assuming that the writer's imagination lacks the strength of wing needful to bear him triumphantly away from the discouraging outlook of his actual present. It must be pointed out, however, that the demarcation of the lyrics given in the notes is adopted from Duhm and Cheyne, and to discuss the question of unity on this basis necessarily does some injustice to the views of other critics, who might prefer a different division.

(2) The question of the *date* of the prophecy is of course influenced by the view held as to its unity, although to a less extent than might be imagined, since both the critics named agree in regarding the whole series of compositions as belonging to the literature of a single general period. Duhm assigns them to the reign of John Hyrcanus, and finds allusions to the Parthian campaign of Antiochus Sidetes (B.C. 129) and the destruction of Samaria (c. 107). But there is really nothing to warrant these precise determinations, and the theory is negated by well-established conclusions as to the close of the O.T. Canon. Cheyne's view is free from this objection and is in itself very attractive. The historical background of the prophecy is found in the events which preceded the dissolution of the Persian Empire (say 350—330). The gloomy survey of ch. xxiv. is explained by the "desolating and protracted wars" of the period, in which the Jews are known to have suffered severely and during which Jerusalem was not improbably laid waste by Persian armies. The premature songs of triumph referred to in ch. xxiv. 16 are supposed to have been called forth by rumours of the expedition of Alexander the Great, whilst the interspersed lyrical passages celebrate the Jewish deliverance achieved by the Macedonian victories. Perhaps the least convincing part of the hypothesis is the identification of the conquered city of xxv. 2, xxvi. 5, with Tyre or Gaza, destroyed by Alexander; but in spite of that Cheyne's view is probably the one which best harmonises the varied indications of the prophecy (see his *Introduction*, pp. 155 ff., and the refs. there).

Of rival theories there is perhaps but one that deserves careful examination, that, viz., which seeks the occasion of the prophecy in the age immediately succeeding the Exile, particularly the Babylonian troubles under Darius Hystaspis. There is, indeed, a surprising number of coincidences between the phenomena of this prophecy and the circumstances of that time or the contemporary literature. The expectation of a great overturning of existing political conditions occurs in the writings of Haggai (ii. 6, 7, 21—23) and Zechariah (i. 11 ff.); the idea of a world-judgment in Isa. xiii. 6 ff.; the universalism of xxv. 6—8 finds nowhere a more sympathetic response than in Isa. xl.—lv.; and even the 'songs of the righteous' (xxiv. 16) have a certain resemblance to xlv. 10. The allusion to recent idolatry in xxvii. 9 is amply accounted for; and the "city" (although too much has been made of this point) of xxiv. 10 ff.,

xxvii. 10 f., xxv. 2, xxvi. 5 might be Babylon, the "world-city," now humbled and soon to be utterly destroyed.

The ultimate decision probably turns on certain general features of the prophecy, which are thought to point to a very late age. These are (a) its apocalyptic colouring and imagery (see, however, the *caveat* on p. 179 above), (b) the advanced form in which it presents the doctrines of immortality (xxv. 8) and the resurrection (xxvi. 19); and (possibly) (c) the belief in tutelary genii of the nations. With regard to these phenomena many will agree with Cheyne that they "become the more intelligible the later we place this composition in the Persian period."

CHAPTERS XXVIII.—XXXII. (XXXIII.).

This important group of discourses is the chief monument of Isaiah's activity in the early years of Sennacherib's reign. The negotiations with Egypt which preceded the revolt of 701 form the historical thread on which the prophecies are strung, and by the help of the prophet's vivid allusions we can almost trace the development of the conspiracy from its first inception to the formal ratification of the treaty with Egypt (see xxviii. 15 [P], xxix. 15, xxx. 1 f., 6 f., xxxi. 1 ff.). The main interest of the chapters, however, lies in the light they throw upon Isaiah's outlook on the ultimate issue of this great providential crisis. Two leading ideas cross each other throughout in a manner which causes surprise and sometimes perplexity. On the one hand there is the anticipation of a sweeping judgment on the unbelief and perversity of the nation, and this is occasionally spoken of in terms which appear to imply the capture of Jerusalem and the complete annihilation of the Hebrew state. (See on ch. xxii. 1—14.) On the other hand the prospect of an immediate and signal intervention of Jehovah, for the salvation of Judah and the destruction of the Assyrians, is no less clearly expressed (as in x. 5—34, xvii. 12—14, xviii.). The peculiarity of the present section is that these two conceptions are presented in almost regular alternation (frequently with abrupt transition) while at the same time it appears impossible to merge them in a single harmonious picture of the future (see further General Introd., pp. xxxvi f. and the notes below).

That the prophecies are rightly assigned to the reign of Sennacherib would probably never have been questioned but for the opening verses (xxviii. 1—4), which must undoubtedly have been written before the fall of Samaria. Accordingly a few critics have held that this passage determines the date of the whole series, while a larger number detach ch. xxviii. from the group and assign it alone to the time before the overthrow of North Israel. It is easier, however, (in view of the numerous affinities between xxviii. and xxix.—xxxi.) to suppose that the opening oracle was for some special reason repeated by Isaiah in the time of Sennacherib, or at least incorporated in a volume of prophecies belonging to that period. The objections to throwing the whole cycle back to the earlier date appear insurmountable. Not only is the great decisive act of Jehovah anticipated within a very short space of time (xxix. 1, 2, xxxii. 10), but the whole situation presupposed is such

as never emerged, so far as is known, prior to the years 704—701. What we have to do with is evidently no mere series of covert and underhand intrigues with Egypt; but a formal alliance with that empire involving an open revolt against Assyria. The nation has resolved to stake everything on a single desperate venture. Of negotiations with Egypt in the years 725—722 we have no record whatever; and if any took place they must, like those of 711, have been checked before leading to a declared rupture with the Assyrians. In these circumstances it would be extremely hazardous to abandon the assured historical ground supplied by the events of 704—701 in favour of any hypothetical rebellion at an earlier time.

The principal divisions are marked by the interjection *Hôî* ("woe"): xxviii. 1, xxix. 1, 15, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1, xxxiii. 1.

CH. XXVIII. ISAIAH'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE DISSOLUTE NOBLES OF JERUSALEM.

The chapter contains four separate discourses:

i. *vv.* 1—6. A denunciation of the "drunkards of Ephraim," with an announcement of the speedy fall of their beautiful city (1—4); ending with a brief glance at the Messianic age beyond the judgment (5, 6). That the first four verses are a real prediction and were therefore uttered before 722 is hardly open to question; but it is not improbable that they were republished by Isaiah as an introduction to the volume of his prophecies (cf. xxx. 8) connected with the revolt against Sennacherib.

ii. *vv.* 7—13. For, continues the prophet, the dissipation for which the northern capital was once notorious is now a startling symptom of the state of society in Jerusalem (7, 8). The policy of rebellion has been hatched by a clique of drunkards. What follows (9—13) evidently reproduces a remarkable dialogue between Isaiah and the leaders of the Egyptian party at one of their disgraceful orgies. The prophet has forced his way into the banquet-chamber; the unmasked debauchees turn on him with insolent raillery, and express in mocking tones their impatience of the irksome monotony of his teaching (9, 10); but Isaiah throws back their sarcasm in their teeth, telling them of a day when Jehovah will speak to them in a far more grievous language, which they cannot fail to understand (11—13).

iii. *vv.* 14—22. A warning against the scornful irreligious temper displayed by the politicians who built their hopes on the alliance with Egypt. With fatuous self-confidence they spoke of their cherished scheme as a covenant with Death and Hell, i.e. as one that secured perfect immunity from every conceivable kind of danger or evil (14, 15). The prophet declares that in the storm of judgment which is fast approaching, every false refuge will be swept away, and those alone will escape who put their trust in Jehovah's immutable purpose of salvation towards Zion (16—22).

iv. *vv.* 23—29. A justification of God's providential dealings with Israel, based on the analogy of the varied operations of agriculture. The wisdom of the husbandman is a reflection of the Infinite Wisdom which governs the world; consistency of aim with diversity of method

Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of 28
 Ephraim,
 Whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower,
 Which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them
 that are overcome with wine.
 Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and strong one, 2
Which as a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm,
 As a flood of mighty waters overflowing,
 Shall cast down to the earth with the hand.
 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, 3

is the characteristic of both. As the farmer varies his activity from season to season, and modifies his treatment in accordance with the nature of his crops, so in the Divine discipline of humanity there is the same wise adaptation of means to ends, and the same patient pursuit of a single beneficial aim through the mingled "goodness and severity" of God.

1—4. The fate of the drunkards of Ephraim. On the luxury and debauchery of Samaria, see Am. iii. 12, 15, iv. 1, vi. 1, 6.

1. In a single image of great beauty the prophet describes the picturesque situation of the city, the tone of its society, and its ripeness for judgment. Samaria, with its ramparts and white terraced streets crowning the summit of a low hill, which rises in the middle of a fertile valley (1 Ki. xvi. 24), is compared to the chaplet of flowers that wreathes the flushed temples of a reveller (cf. Wisd. Sol. ii. 7, 8). But the long carousal is nearly over, the wreath is already faded and soon (v. 3) will be dashed to the ground. The verse should be read:

Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,
 And (to) the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
 Which is upon the fat valley of the wine-smitten.

overcome (lit. "struck down") *with wine*] (οἶνον λήγες) the last stage of intoxication. Hard drinking is compared to a combat between the toper and his drink, in which the latter is victorious, ch. xvi. 8.

2. The reason for the woe of v. 1. Render: Behold Jehovah hath a mighty and strong one, like a tempest of hail, a destroying storm; like a flow of mighty overflowing waters, which casts down to the earth with violence.

a mighty and strong one] i.e. the Assyrian, Jehovah's instrument (ch. x. 5).

a destroying storm] Delitzsch renders, less suitably perhaps, "a pestilential wind." The word occurs again only in Deut. xxxii. 24; Ps. xci. 6; but a closely related one in Hos. xiii. 14 (A.V. "destruction"). The image of the storm, here presented in three forms, recurs in vv. 15, 18 f.

shall cast] Better, *casts* (perf. of experience, Davidson, Synt. § 40, e). The subj. is the storm of waters.

with the hand] i.e. with force.

Shall be trodden under feet:

- 4 And the glorious beauty, which *is* on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower,
And as the hasty fruit before the summer;
Which *when* he that looketh upon it seeth,
While it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

- 5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory,
And for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,
6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment,

3. The verb *shall be trodden* is in the plural number. Apparently the prophet intended to include in its subject both the images of *v. 1*; but his thoughts were diverted by the other figure which is developed in *v. 4*. In the Hebr. the order is: **With the feet shall be trodden down the proud crown of the**, &c. (as *v. 1*).

4. Render: **And the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley** (*v. 1*), **shall be like the early fig before the fruit-harvest**, &c. These "early figs," which might be found in the end of June, several weeks before the proper fig-season (in August), were esteemed a great delicacy; Hos. ix. 10; Mic. vii. 1; Nah. iii. 12; Jer. xxiv. 2.

which when he...seeth] Render: **which when any one seeth** (lit. "(the seer) seeth"; indef. subj., Davidson, *Synt.* § 108, R. 1). To see, to snatch, to swallow, is the work of a moment. So greedily and hastily and easily shall the Assyrians devour Samaria!

5, 6. Jehovah Himself the true glory of His people; a Messianic pendant to the foregoing picture of Samaria's fall. The phrase *in that day* points as usual to the indefinite future of the Messianic age, not to the day of the judgment on North Israel. Whether the "remnant of His people" denotes the survivors of the Northern tribes, or those of Judah, or of the whole nation, it means a converted remnant; and there is no reason to suppose that Isaiah at any time expected the conversion of Judah to follow immediately the destruction of Ephraim. He is here looking beyond the whole series of national judgments, and the insertion of the promise is evidently suggested by the contrast between the false glory that has vanished and the true glory which shall endure.

5. *a crown of glory*] no longer a "crown of pride," as *vv. 1, 3*.

diadem of beauty] The word *šēphîrāh* (diadem) occurs again only in Ezek. vii. 7, 10 (where, however, the sense is disputed). It probably denotes a "ring" or circlet.

the residue (remnant) of his people] The exact phrase is not found elsewhere.

And for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way;

The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink,

They are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink;

They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness,

So that there is no place clean.

8

6. Jehovah is not only the beauty of the redeemed nation, but the source of all civic and martial virtues.

a spirit of judgment] The same phrase (but with a different meaning) occurs in ch. iv. 4. "Spirit" is used here as in ch. xi. 2. *to him that sitteth in judgment*] (or "over the judgment[-seat]")—the king or the judge (cf. ch. xxxii. 1).

for strength (or, *valour*) *to them that...gate*] Better, **at the gate**, not the gate of the enemy, but of the city or land (Nah. iii. 13) into which the enemy have penetrated. The promise is somewhat remarkable for Isaiah (cf. Mic. v. 5 ff.).

7, 8 form the literary introduction to the dramatic incident represented in vv. 9—13; they are not part of Isaiah's spoken discourse on that occasion. The opening words **But these also** (R.V.) connect this section with the preceding, but the connexion is due to similarity of subject, and not to coincidence of date. There are obvious reasons why the prediction of the fall of Samaria should be republished in the time of Sennacherib. The magnates of Jerusalem were following the lead of Samaria, both in their dissolute habits and in their foolish trust in an Egyptian alliance; Samaria is a mirror in which they may read their own character and their own doom. On intemperance among the Judæan nobility see ch. v. 11 f., 22.

7. *the priest and the prophet*] Better: **priest and prophet**. These are specially mentioned as the spiritual leaders of the people, who opposed Isaiah in the name of Jehovah, and backed up the plans of the politicians with the pretended authority of Divine revelation.

swallowed up of wine] Perhaps, "confused by wine," see on iii. 12.

are out of the way] R.V. **have gone astray**—see xix. 14.

vision (a peculiar form in the Hebr.) refers to the function of the prophets; *judgment* (lit. "judicial matters") to that of the priests (cf. Deut. xvii. 8 ff., xix. 17; Ezek. xliv. 24). It is not asserted that the prophets have no visions, but only that, through self-indulgence, they lack the capacity to discern their real significance.

8. For *vomit* and *filthiness*, read **filthy vomit**.

9—13. The occasion of this remarkable encounter was probably a feast held to celebrate the renunciation of allegiance to Assyria. Isaiah

- 9 Whom shall he teach knowledge?
And whom shall he make to understand doctrine?
Them that are weaned from the milk,
And drawn from the breasts.
- 10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept;
Line upon line, line upon line;
Here a little, *and* there a little:
- 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue
Will he speak to this people.
- 12 To whom he said,
This is the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest;

has surprised the drunkards over their cups and administered some such rebuke as we read in *vv.* 7, 8. (On the excesses that often accompanied sacrificial meals, see *1 Sam.* i. 13 f.; *Am.* ii. 8.)

9. The retort of the revellers to Isaiah's recriminations. The meaning is: "Who are we that we should thus be lectured by this man? Are we newly-weaned infants, &c.?" (cf. *R.V.*). *Whom will he teach knowledge?* expresses the injured self-consciousness of the priests; *whom will he make to understand doctrine?* that of the prophets. For *doctrine* *R.V.* has **the message**; the word commonly means "report," but here it denotes "that which is heard" (by prophetic audition) from the Lord, as in *v.* 19; *ch.* liii. 1; *Jer.* xlix. 14; *Ob.* 1.

10. The toppers proceed to mock, in stammering drunken tones, the excited utterance and the wearisome iterations of the prophet's teaching. Translate with *R.V.* (marg.) **For it is precept upon precept...rule upon rule...here a little, there a little.** The *Hebr.* is a series of monosyllables (*çav lâ-çāv çav lâ-çāv çav lâ-qāv çav lâ-qāv z'êr shâm z'êr shâm*); the sense is not quite certain, but the tones sufficiently represent at once the disgust of the speakers with the restless persistency of their monitor and their own inability to express themselves distinctly.

11. Isaiah parries the gibe with a terrible threat. Jehovah is about to employ a more uncouth language, to which their mocking description will fully apply, viz., the harsh barbarous accents of the Assyrian invaders.

stammering lips] either "stammerings of lip" or "stammerers of lip" (cf. the Greek use of *βάρβαρος*). *Comp.* *1 Cor.* xiv. 21.

12. *To whom he said*] Rather: **He who said to them.** The verse reproduces the tenor and aim of all Isaiah's teaching (cf. *v.* 16; *ch.* xxx. 15). He had sought to point out the true way of rest for the exhausted nation by abstinence from the spirited foreign policy advocated by the anti-Assyrian faction. Two translations, however, are possible. Either: "This (Jerusalem) is the resting-place; give rest to the weary; and this is the place of refreshment"; or: **This (line of action) is the (true) rest...and this is the (true) refreshment.** The

And this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.
 But the word of the LORD was unto them
 Precept upon precept, precept upon precept;
 Line upon line, line upon line;
 Here a little, *and* there a little;
 That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken,
 And snared, and taken.

13

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, 14
 That rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem.
 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with 15
 death,
 And with hell are we at agreement;

latter seems preferable. The word for "rest" (usually "resting-place") is used in the same sense as here in 2 Sam. xiv. 17. "The weary" is the ordinary plebeian, who had everything to lose and nothing to gain, by the chances of war.

13. *But the word of the LORD was*] Render: **And (so) the word of Jehovah shall be**—all that they had scoffingly said about Isaiah's message (v. 10), a monotonous, intolerable, yet unavoidable, succession of judgments (cf. v. 19).

that they might...backward] **that they may go and stumble backwards** (cf. ch. vi. 11, 12). *and be broken...taken*] as in ch. viii. 15.

14—22. There is again a *literary* connexion with what precedes; although the passage is probably a summary of an independent discourse. The prophet's aim is to impress on his opponents the disastrous consequences of persisting in their scoffing attitude towards himself and his message.

14. *ye scornful men*] Better: **scoffing men**. The "scoffer" (*lêç*, a word almost confined to Pss. and Prov.) represents the last degree of ungodliness,—open contempt of religion. The phrase here is applied to worldly politicians, who form their plans in defiance of Jehovah's revealed will (cf. v. 22; ch. xxix. 20).

that rule this people] The prophet's antagonists are the party which has gained the upper hand in the councils of state; the king himself is tacitly acquitted of responsibility.

15 is the protasis to v. 16 f.

Because ye have said] Isaiah no doubt clothes the thoughts of the conspirators in his own language; but the vagueness of the allusions corresponds to the air of mystery which shrouded their designs. The utmost secrecy was observed with regard to the negotiations with Egypt (ch. xxix. 15, xxx. 1), and it is doubtful if at this time Isaiah knew exactly what project was on foot.

with hell are we at agreement] Lit. **with Sheôl we have made a vision**. The simplest explanation of this and the preceding expression

When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it
shall not come *unto* us:

For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God,
Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone,
A tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure
foundation:

He that believeth shall not make haste.

is that the political plot had been ratified by a compact with the dreaded powers of the underworld. That those who had renounced the guidance of Jehovah should have recourse to necromancy and other superstitions was natural (ch. viii. 19). At the same time the phrases may be proverbial, or they may merely express Isaiah's abhorrence of the dark immorality which marked the proceedings. In any case the feeling attributed to the schemers is one of absolute security against the worst that fate could bring.

the overflowing scourge—a mixture of metaphors, which is still further increased in v. 18.

we have made lies our refuge] The reference might be to conscious political treachery (towards Assyria), but more probably it is to false grounds of confidence, such as false oracles (Ezek. xiii. 6—8; Mic. ii. 11), Isaiah putting his own language into their mouth.

16. There is but one true ground of confidence—Jehovah's revealed purpose with regard to Zion.

Behold, I lay] Strictly: **Behold, I am he that hath laid** (for the Hebr. construction cf. ch. xxix. 14, xxxviii. 5). The figure of the verse requires little explanation; it is illustrated by the massive and "costly" stones which formed the foundations of Solomon's temple (1 Ki. v. 17). And the general idea is that Jehovah's relation to Israel is the stable and permanent, though invisible, foundation of all God's work in the world. Beyond this it is hardly necessary to go in seeking an answer to the question, Of what is the stone an emblem? It is not Jehovah Himself, since it is Jehovah who lays it; it is not the Temple, nor Mount Zion, nor the Davidic dynasty, for these are at most but visible symbols of a spiritual fact disclosed to the prophet's faith. The foundation stone represents the one element in human history which is indestructible, viz., the purpose of God, and that purpose as historically realised in the relation which He has established between Himself and the people of Israel.

a sure foundation] Transl. with R.V. of **sure foundation**.

he that believeth shall not make haste] The LXX. reads "shall not be ashamed" (*yēbôsh* for *yāhîsh*). Cheyne and others propose a slight emendation (*yāmûsh*) which gives the sense "shall not give way." This is the second great passage in which Isaiah emphasises faith as the primary condition of salvation (ch. vii. 9).

Judgment also will I lay to the line, 17
 And righteousness to the plummet:
 And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
 And the waters shall overflow the hiding place.
 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, 18
 And your agreement with hell shall not stand;
 When the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
 Then ye shall be trodden down by it.
 From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: 19
 For morning by morning shall it pass over, by day
 and by night:
 And it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.
 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch 20
 himself on it:

The image of the verse recurs in Ps. cxviii. 22; and is applied to the Messiah in Rom. ix. 33, x. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 6—8 (following the LXX. text).

17. The first half of the verse continues *v.* 16. In order to build on this foundation, it is necessary that political conduct be conformed to the eternal principles of the Divine government; these are "judgment" and "righteousness" (see on i. 21), which are here compared to the builder's *line* and *plummet*. Render as in R.V. **I will make judgment the line and righteousness the plummet.** Cf. ch. xxxiv. 11.

and the hail...] Every course of action not based on faith in Jehovah, and not in accordance with the strict rule of the Divine righteousness will prove a false refuge in the day of judgment, see *v.* 15 and cf. *v.* 2. Comp. also Matt. vii. 24—27. The verb "sweep away" is not found elsewhere.

18. See on *v.* 15. *shall be disannulled*] lit. "smeared over" (cf. Gen. vi. 14) i.e. "cancelled," "obliterated." The verb is the technical word for expiate (as e.g. xxii. 14), and although it is nowhere else in the O.T. used exactly as here, the sense is supported by Syriac usage, and an alteration of the text is not necessary.

19. *From the time that it goeth forth*] Render as R.V. **As often as it passeth through** (1 Sam. xviii. 30). *it shall take you away*] The judgment will be a protracted visitation (like the repeated blows of a "scourge") and will continue till every one of the conspirators has been carried away.

it shall be a vexation...report] Perhaps: **it shall be sheer vexation to interpret audition** (the same word as *v.* 9). That is, all prophetic oracles shall then be so uniformly and unambiguously terrible, that the prophet will shrink from the unwelcome task of communicating their import.

20. A proverbial expression for the intolerable situation which the politicians are preparing for themselves and their country.

And the covering narrower than that *he* can wrap himself *in it*.

- 21 For the LORD shall rise up as *in* mount Perazim,
He shall be wroth as *in* the valley of Gibeon,
That *he* may do his work, his strange work;
And bring to pass his act, his strange act.
- 22 Now therefore be ye not mockers,
Lest your bands be made strong:
For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts
A consumption, even determined
Upon the whole earth.
- 23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice;
Hearken, and hear my speech.

21. The "strangeness" of Jehovah's work (v. 12, x. 12) consists in his fighting with the foreigners against his own people. The historical allusions are to David's victories over the Philistines in the vicinity of Jerusalem; see 2 Sam. v. 20 f.; 1 Chron. xiv. 11 f. (Baal-Perazim); 2 Sam. v. 25 (Geba); 1 Chron. xiv. 16 (Gibeon, as here). The last part reads: **to perform his act—strange is his act! and to work his work—barbarous is his work!**

22. A final appeal to the "scoffers" (v. 14), based on the irreversible decision of Jehovah.

be ye not mockers] **do not play the scoffer.**

lest your bands be made strong] i.e. "lest ye be firmly bound and delivered up for execution."

a consumption, even determined] **an extermination and a decisive work** (as ch. x. 23).

23—29. A parable derived from husbandry. The motive of its insertion in this place was probably the different treatment meted out to Samaria and to Jerusalem. The precise point of the analogy is somewhat uncertain; but perhaps we may interpret the thought as follows. There are two parts. The first (vv. 24—26) appears to justify Jehovah's procedure by the end He has in view. As the farmer does not go on ploughing for ever out of a mere blind passion for ploughing, but ploughs in order to sow; so Jehovah's work of judgment is to issue in the preparation of a seed-plot, and in due time ploughing will give place (in the case of Judah) to sowing. The second (vv. 27—29) draws the lesson that the operation of threshing varies with the material to be operated on. The delicate fennel, e.g. would be destroyed by the rough implements used on coarser grain; and in Judah there is (what there was not in Samaria) the tender growth of the "holy seed," the nucleus of the true Israel, for whose sake judgment must be tempered with mercy.

23. The introduction to the parable; cf. ch. xxxii. 9.

24—26. Ploughing is followed by sowing.

Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? 24
 Doth he open and break the clods of his ground?
 When he hath made plain the face thereof, 25
 Doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the
 cummin,
 And cast in the principal wheat
 And the appointed barley and the rye *in* their place?
 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, *and* doth 26
 teach him.

24. *all day*] i.e. **continually** (R.V.), “uninterruptedly.” The emphasis of the question lies on this word.

to sow is an awkward addition and may be a gloss. If genuine the sense must be paraphrased “seeing he has the intention of sowing.”

doth he open...ground] Trans. **doth he (continually) open and harrow his ground?**

25. *fitches* (R.V. marg. **black cummin** [*Nigella sativa*]) and *cummin* [*Cuminum sativum*] are both mentioned only in this passage. Note the different methods of sowing; **scatter** (of the fitches), **sow** (of the cummin), **plant** (of wheat and barley). The planting of wheat, &c. in rows is a mark of the most careful husbandry, still practised in Yemen and Egypt.

the principal wheat] Rather: **the wheat in rows** (R.V.).

the appointed barley] a very difficult expression. Perhaps “barley in the appointed place” (R.V.). Both this adjective and that for “principal” are wanting in the LXX. and are deleted as mistakes or glosses by Cheyne and others.

the rye in their place] **the spelt** (others, “vetches”) **as its border** (see R.V.). The allusion apparently is to a custom of surrounding certain crops with a protecting border of hardier plants.

26. All this is done in obedience to an inherited, almost instinctive, wisdom, which rests ultimately on Divine inspiration. See *v.* 29; and *Ecclus.* vii. 15 (“husbandry which the Most High hath ordained”). *Verg. Georg.* i. 147.

to discretion] **to right**, i.e. “right, or orderly, method.” The word is that usually rendered “judgment,” used here in a non-ethical application.

27—29. Threshing is not bruising. Three methods of threshing are alluded to. (a) Beating with a rod or flail (*cf.* *Jud.* vi. 11; *Ruth* ii. 17). (b) Treading with the feet of cattle (*Deut.* xxv. 4; *Mic.* iv. 13; but see on *v.* 28). (c) Drawing a heavy wooden sledge, with sharp stones or iron spikes fixed in its under surface (*ḥārāṭ*) or a wagon (*‘āgālāh*) with a great number of sharp-edged wheels, over the grain. The point of the illustration is that the method suitable to one kind of grain would be ruinous to another (*v.* 27); and that even the rougher methods are applied with moderation (*v.* 28).

- 27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing *instrument*,
Neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin ;
But the fitches are beaten out with a staff,
And the cummin with a rod.
- 28 Bread *corn* is bruised ;
Because he will not ever be threshing it,
Nor break *it with* the wheel of his cart,
Nor bruise it *with* his horsemen.
- 29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts,
Which is wonderful in counsel, *and* excellent in working.

27. *with a threshing instrument*] the sledge (*hārûṣ*). *a cart wheel*
the wheel of a threshing wagon (*‘āgālāh*).

28. Transl. **Is bread (corn) crushed? Nay, he does not keep threshing it perpetually, &c.** If the text be right, the sentence continues “and rolling his wagon-wheels and horses over it, &c.” But the mention of “horses” as employed in agriculture is suspicious, and a better sense is gained if, with Duham, we slightly change the text of that word and translate thus: **But when he has rolled his wagon-wheel (over it), he scatters it** (i.e. “tosses it up to the wind,”—the same word in Ezek. xvii. 21) **without having crushed it.**

29. To Isaiah there is something very impressive in the peasant’s subtle yet unpretentious knowledge of his craft; he is like a part of nature, and his wisdom seems a direct emanation from the infinite Wisdom to which all things owe their being (cf. v. 26).

which is wonderful...working] **wonderful is His counsel, great His wisdom**; lit. “He produces wonderful counsel, He magnifies wisdom” (cf. “Wonderful Counsellor,” ch. ix. 6). The word rendered “working” is a technical term of the Wisdom Literature. It seems to denote that which is essentially rational. “It is said of a state or action when it corresponds to the idea; and conversely of thought when it corresponds to the reality” (Davidson, *Job*, p. 39, in this series).

CH. XXIX. 1—14. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF JEHOVAH’S WONDERFUL PURPOSE REGARDING JERUSALEM, AND ITS RECEPTION ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE.

Under the second “Woe” (v. 1) are grouped two oracles, which may have been originally independent; or they may be intimately connected, the second describing the effect of the first on the minds of Isaiah’s hearers.

i. vv. 1—8. The impending humiliation and deliverance of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, apostrophised by the mystic name of “Ariel,” is at present gay and careless and secure, the festal calendar follows its accustomed course, and this state of things may endure for a short time longer (1). But already in vision the prophet sees her beset by hosts

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt! 29
Add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.
Yet I will distress Ariel,

of enemies, and reduced to the lowest depths of despair (2—4) when suddenly the Lord Himself, arrayed in the terrors of earthquake and tempest, appears in judgment (6), and in a moment the scene is changed. In the very hour of their triumph, the enemies of Zion are disappointed of their expectation, and vanish like a vision of the night (7, 8).

ii. vv. 9—14. A rebuke of the spiritual blindness and unbelief, and the hollow formal religion prevalent amongst all classes of the people.

(1) vv. 9—12. Jehovah has visited the leaders of the people with judicial blindness (9 f.); the consequence is that neither among the cultured nor the unlettered can the word of the Lord find entrance (11 f.).

(2) vv. 13, 14. Because the popular religion has degenerated into a mechanical routine of traditional observances (13) it is necessary for Jehovah to adopt startling measures, transcending all human calculation and insight (14).

1. Jerusalem's time of joyous security shall speedily come to an end.

Ho Ariel, Ariel, city where David encamped! (R.V.). Of the word "Ariel" two explanations (both ancient) are given. (a) That which renders it "Lion of God" is undoubtedly the one most naturally suggested by the form of the word. It is also thought to be confirmed by the proper name 'ar'ēl in Gen. xlv. 16; Num. xxvi. 17; and the "lion-like men" ('ārīl) of 2 Sam. xxiii. 20; 1 Chron. xi. 22; although all these analogies are very doubtful (cf. ch. xxxiii. 7). But is it suitable in the present context? Hardly, unless we take v. 2 to mean that Jerusalem when driven to bay, will exhibit a prowess worthy of her mystic appellation; which is not at all the idea of the passage. The name is in any case a strange one for a city, and it would be difficult to account for its selection by Isaiah. (b) The other (and preferable) explanation is given by the Targum, and is supported by a word which occurs in two forms (*har'ēl* and 'ārī'ēl) in Ezek. xliii. 15 f. It appears to mean "altar-hearth"; and occurs, probably in the same sense, in the inscription of the Moabite Stone. The translation here will be either "hearth of God" or (better) simply "altar-hearth." How Isaiah was led to such a designation we shall see from v. 2.

where *David dwelt*] R.V. **encamped**. Not "against which" David encamped, as the LXX. fancied (see on v. 3), but which he occupied and fortified.

add ye year to year] i.e. "let a year or two more come and go": cf. xxxii. 10. The discourse was probably delivered at the leading festival, the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the "turn of the year" (Ex. xxxiv. 22) in ancient Israel.

let them kill sacrifices] R.V. has the true rendering: **let the feasts come round**; "run their round"—but only a few times more.

2—5. The humiliation and distress of Ariel, at the hands of the Assyrians.

And there shall be heaviness and sorrow:

And it shall be unto me as Ariel.

3 And I will camp against thee round about,
And will lay siege against thee *with* a mount,
And I will raise forts against thee.

4 And thou shalt be brought down, *and* shalt speak out
of the ground,

And thy speech shall be low out of the dust,

And thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar
spirit, out of the ground,

And thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like
small dust,

And the multitude of the terrible ones *shall be* as chaff
that passeth away:

2. *there shall be heaviness and sorrow*] Better: "mourning and lamentation" (R.V.), but still better (as reproducing the assonance of the original): **moaning and bemoaning** (Cheyne). The expression recurs in Lam. ii. 5.

it shall be unto me as Ariel] **she shall be to me like a (true) altar-hearth** (*Kaph veritatis*). If Ariel meant "Lion of God" this clause would necessarily have to be understood in a favourable sense; on the view here followed it may be either a promise or a threat; the context decides for the latter. The meaning is that Jerusalem will be either a place where the flames of war rage fiercely, or a place reeking with the blood of countless human victims. We may suppose that Isaiah addressed these words to the worshippers in the Temple, and that the great altar with its bleeding victims stood out before his mind as an emblem of Jerusalem's fate, and suggested the name "Ariel."

3. *I will camp against thee round about*] see v. 1. LXX. carries the parallel still further by reading "I will encamp...*like David*," a reading which would be plausible if "against which" could be fairly supplied in v. 1. "Round about" is the same word as "like a ball" in xxii. 18.

with a mount] R.V. **with a fort**; perhaps lines of circumvallation. For *forts*, read **siege-works**, as R.V. Comp. Ezek. iv. 1—3.

4 explains the "moaning and bemoaning" of v. 2. The verse reads: **And thou shalt be laid low, speaking from (beneath) the earth, and thy speech shall come humbly from the dust; and thy voice shall be like (that of) a ghost (coming) from the earth, and thy speech shall squeak from the dust.** The allusions in the latter half of the verse are explained under ch. viii. 19. The figures signify the utter abasement and exhaustion of the "joyous city."

5—8. The discomfiture and dispersion of Zion's enemies in the hour of their triumph.

5. *thy strangers*] the barbarians who assail thee.

Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts

6

With thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise,
With storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring
 fire.

And the multitude of all the nations that fight against *7*
 Ariel,

Even all that fight against her and her munition, and
 that distress her,

Shall be as a dream of a night vision.

It shall even be as when a hungry *man* dreameth, and *8*
 behold, he eateth;

But he awaketh, and his soul *is* empty:

Or as when a thirsty *man* dreameth, and behold, he
 drinketh;

But he awaketh, and behold, *he is* faint, and his soul
 hath appetite:

So shall the multitude of all the nations be,
 That fight against mount Zion.

Stay yourselves, and wonder;

9

the terrible ones] or *the tyrants*.

6. See ch. xxx. 27—33. The last words of *v.* 5 should be read as part of this sentence. **And suddenly, full suddenly, she shall be visited, &c.** The word for “visit” is ambiguous, being freely used both of punishment and mercy, but the passive appears never to be employed in a good sense except here.

7, 8. The figure of the dream is applied in two ways; first, objectively, to the vanishing of the enemy; second, subjectively, to his disappointment.

7. *her munition*] perhaps *her citadel* (R.V. “stronghold”).

a dream of a night vision] R.V. **a dream, a vision of the night.**

8. *dreameth, and behold*] The invariable formula in narrating a dream; Gen. xl. 9, 16, xli. 1 ff.; Dan. ii. 31, vii. 5, 6.

his soul] the seat of appetite and desire: cf. *v.* 14, xxxii. 6; Prov. vi. 30. A more vivid representation of utter disenchantment than this verse gives can scarcely be conceived.

9—12. The people meet their doom in a state of spiritual stupor, unobservant of Jehovah’s work, and heedless of the warnings given to them.

9. *Stay yourselves, and wonder*] Rather (as R.V. marg.), **Be ye amazed and wonder.** The first verb is of uncertain derivation. Probably both express the idea of astonishment. Cheyne (*Comm.*) rendered: “astonish yourselves and be astonished.”

- Cry ye out, and cry:
 They are drunken, but not *with* wine;
 They stagger, but not *with* strong drink.
 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the
 spirit of deep sleep,
 And hath closed your eyes:
 The prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he
 covered.
 11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words
 of a book that is sealed,
 Which *men* deliver to one that is learned,
 Saying, Read this, I pray thee:
 And he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed:
 12 And the book is delivered to *him* that is not learned,
 Saying, Read this, I pray thee:
 And he saith, I am not learned.
 13 Wherefore the Lord said,
 Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with
 their mouth,

cry ye out, and cry] Render: **Blind yourselves and be blind.** The root of both verbs is that used in ch. vi. 10 of "smearing" the eyes: the doom then threatened is now being fulfilled.

they are drunken...they stagger] These perfects should probably be pointed and translated as imperatives; "be drunken" (so the LXX.).

10. Their infatuation is caused by Jehovah; see on ch. vi. 10.

deep sleep] The word (*tarḏēmāh*) is nearly always used of a profound slumber due to supernatural agency (1 Sam. xxvi. 12) and favourable for the reception of Divine revelations (Job iv. 13). The expressions *the prophets* and *the seers* are obviously glosses, based on a misconception of the meaning of the verse. Render: **hath closed your eyes, and your heads hath he covered** (or muffled).

11, 12. A distinction is drawn between the ignorance of the educated and that of the uneducated classes. The man of culture is like one who *will* not break the seal of a sealed book that he may read it; the man in the street *cannot* read it even if unsealed. The passage is interesting as illustrating the diffusion of literary education in Isaiah's time (cf. Jer. v. 4, 5).

11. *the vision of all*] i.e. the revelation of all this (cf. Ps. xlix. 17, "all that").

learned] is literally "knowing letters."

13, 14. This spiritual insensibility of the people is the outcome of its whole religious attitude, which is insincere, formal, and traditional. The contrast implied is that between a religion of mere ritual and one of moral fellowship with God.

13. *draw near* (i.e. worship) *me with their mouth, and with their*

And with their lips do honour me,
But have removed their heart far from me,
And their fear towards me is taught *by* the
precept of men:

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous ¹⁴
work amongst this people,

Even a marvellous work and a wonder:

For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish,
And the understanding of their prudent *men*
shall be hid.

lips do honour me] A.V. is here unquestionably right against R.V., which slavishly follows the Hebrew accentuation, rendering, "draw nigh, and with their mouth and with their lips do honour me." ^{with}
their mouth...their lips]—uttering the prescribed liturgical formulæ.

have removed their heart far from me] The heart is the organ of intelligence and moral obedience and inclination (cf. Prov. xxiii. 26).

their fear towards me] R.V. **their fear of me**, i.e. their piety, religion.

is taught by the precept of men] Better as R.V.: **is** (or, **has become**) **a commandment of men which hath been taught**;—a human ordinance learned by rote (cf. Matt. xv. 1—9). This pregnant criticism expresses with epigrammatic force the fundamental difference between the pagan and the biblical conceptions of religion. Religion, being personal fellowship with God, cannot be "learned" from men, but only by revelation (Matt. xvi. 17).

14. Israel being thus hopelessly estranged from true knowledge of Jehovah, Jehovah must (and will) reveal His character in a way not to be misunderstood.

behold, I will proceed] The Hebr. has the same peculiar construction as in xxviii. 16.

to do a marvellous...wonder] Render: **to work wonderfully with this people,—wonderfully and wondrously** (cf. xxviii. 21).

the wisdom of their wise men (cf. Jer. xviii. 18) *shall perish*]—so far will the issue surpass human forethought.

shall be hid] **shall hide itself**, in shame and confusion.

CH. XXIX. 15—24. A MESSIANIC FORECAST.

The third "Woe" (v. 15), directed against the political intrigue with Egypt, merely serves as a point of attachment for a glowing description of the regenerated Israel. The course of thought is as follows:—

The prophet, having unmasked the designs of the conspirators, expostulates with them for pitting their foolish plans against the purpose of the Almighty (vv. 15, 16).

Ere long, Jehovah will prove His power by a marvellous transformation of nature and society; the word of the Lord will be received

- 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide *their* counsel
from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark,
And they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?
16 Surely your turning *of things* upside down shall be
esteemed as the potter's clay:
For shall the work say of him that made it, He made
me not?
Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it,
He had no understanding?
17 *Is* it not yet a very little while,
And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?
18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the
book,

by the people, now deaf and dumb to spiritual things; the poor and oppressed shall rejoice in their God (vv. 17—19).

In that glorious age there shall be neither tyrant nor scoffer,—neither oppression from without, nor injustice within the state (vv. 20, 21).

The time of Israel's humiliation shall soon pass away, never to return; and those who at present are perplexed and discontented shall accept the instruction of true religion (vv. 22—24).

15. Cf. xxx. 1, xxxi. 1. *that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD*] **that hide a plan deep from Jehovah.** The Egyptian party at court had done their utmost to conceal their project from Isaiah; this attempt to deceive God's prophet is an act of rebellion, an attempt to steal a march on Jehovah. That they had other reasons for working in the dark is no doubt true; but these were of small moment compared with the sin of refusing to Jehovah a voice in their counsels of state.

16. Shall the creature attempt to outwit the Creator?

Surely your turning...clay] Render as R.V. marg.: **O your perversity! Shall the potter be counted as clay?** "Is there no difference between maker and thing made?" On the image of the clay and the potter, cf. ch. xlv. 9, lxiv. 8; Jer. xviii. 6; Rom. ix. 21 ff.

17. The expressions here were perhaps proverbial; they are almost exactly repeated in ch. xxxii. 15.

yet a very little while] as in ch. x. 25 (cf. xvi. 14).

Lebanon is here a synonym for forest (see on ch. x. 34); it answers to "wilderness" (uncultivated pasture-land) in xxxii. 15.

a fruitful field] cf. x. 18.

18. *the words of the book*] There is a reference implied to vv. 11, 12. "Deafness" and "blindness" are metaphors for the spiritual obtuseness which at present characterises the nation (v. 10).

And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity,
and out of darkness.

The meek also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, 19
And the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy
One of Israel.

For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the 20
scorner is consumed,

And all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

That make a man an offender for a word, 21

And lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate,

And turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, 22
concerning the house of Jacob,

19. The *meek* and *poor* (as in the Psalms) are the oppressed and down-trodden lower orders, as contrasted with the irreligious upper class (*vv.* 20 f.). They have now no hope but in Jehovah; then they shall **obtain fresh joy** in Him, because He has delivered them.

20. *the terrible one*] or "tyrant" probably denotes an external oppressor (the Assyrian); cf. xxv. 3, 4; *the scorner* is the despiser of religion (ch. xxviii. 14, 22; Ps. i. 1, &c.).

all that watch for iniquity] Perhaps "those who are wakefully intent upon plans of mischief" (Mic. ii. 1; Am. viii. 5). Some think the phrase is ironical, implying that those spoken of were appointed to watch over right, but betrayed their trust in the manner described in *v.* 21.

21. *That make a man an offender for a word*] The verb rendered "make an offender" usually means "lead into sin" (Ex. xxiii. 33; Eccles. v. 6, &c.); and is so understood in R.V. marg. "make men to offend by their words." Here, however, the second part of the verse seems to shew that it is used in a declarative sense ("make a man out to be an offender"). *for a word* should be translated either by **a (false) word**; or (as R.V.) **in a cause**.

him that reproveth in the gate] (cf. Am. v. 10). The person indicated may be either a judge ("umpire," as Job ix. 33) or a private individual who stands up for justice in the place of public assembly.

turn aside the just (from his right, ch. x. 2; Am. v. 12) *for a thing of nought*] rather, as R.V. **with a thing of nought**, "on an empty pretext."

22. *who redeemed Abraham*] The clause is suspicious both from its position in the original, and from its contents. There is no incident in the biblical history of Abraham to which the expression "redeem" is specially appropriate; there is, however, a late Jewish legend about his being delivered from a fiery death prepared for him by his heathen relations (Book of Jubilees, ch. xii.). The words may be a late interpolation.

- Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
 Neither shall his face now wax pale.
 23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands,
 in the midst of him,
 They shall sanctify my name,
 And sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
 And shall fear the God of Israel.
 24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to under-
 standing,
 And they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

not now] spoken from the standpoint of the ideal future.

23. *when he seeth his children, the work...*] R.V. marg. "when his children see the work" [lit. "when he (his children) shall see the work, &c."] Neither rendering is satisfactory, and "his children" should be omitted as a marginal gloss.

sanctify... fear] The same words are used in ch. viii. 13.

24. The meaning is that even the least capable and most refractory classes of the community shall willingly subject themselves to the teaching of revelation.

understanding and *doctrine* are words characteristic of the Hebrew Wisdom Literature (xxviii. 29).

CH. XXX. A SERIES OF ORACLES DEALING WITH THE EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES; THE PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF ISRAEL, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ASSYRIANS.

i. vv. 1—7. A "Woe" against the treaty with Egypt, which is here for the first time referred to in express terms. The Judæan embassy is already on its way across the terrible desert (6); and the prophet reiterates his warning against it as an enterprise contrary to Jehovah's will (1, 2) and based on an absurdly exaggerated estimate of the resources of Egypt (3—5, 7).

ii. vv. 8—17. Isaiah receives a command to record in writing his unavailing protest against this fatal step, now irrevocably taken (8). It is the crowning evidence of the rebellious disposition of the nation, its contempt for the organs of revelation, and antipathy to the holy rule of Jehovah (9—11). The disastrous consequences are then set forth by the help of an effective comparison (12—14); and finally the true and false policy for Israel are tersely summed up and contrasted and the issue of the choice that has been made is clearly indicated (15—17).

iii. vv. 18—26. A picture of the blessings reserved for the faithful remnant in the Messianic dispensation. The principal features are, a teachable disposition in the people (20, 21), the cessation of idolatry (22), and a miraculous transformation of the external aspect of nature (23—26). The passage is remarkably similar in character to ch. xxix. 15—24.

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, 30
 That take counsel, but not of me;
 And that cover *with* a covering, but not of my Spirit,
 That *they* may add sin to sin:
 That walk to go down *into* Egypt, 2
 And have not asked *at* my mouth;
 To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,
 And to trust in the shadow of Egypt.
 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, 3
 And the trust in the shadow of Egypt *your* confusion.
 For his princes were at Zoan, 4

iv. vv. 27—33. The destruction of Assyria accomplished by a terrible display of Jehovah's might. Jehovah in person suddenly appears on the scene, not, as in iii. 14, to judge His own people, but to execute vengeance on their enemies (27, 28); the Israelites are but spectators of the great catastrophe and accompany its progress with songs of thanksgiving for their deliverance (29—32); while the remains of the Assyrian host are consumed on the vast funereal pyre which the prophet's imagination sees already prepared for their cremation (33).

1—5. The futile alliance with Egypt denounced. Comp. xxix. 15, xxxi. 1.

1. *Woe to the rebellious children*] See on i. 2, 4 and i. 23; cf. xxx. 9. The "sons" are "rebellious" inasmuch as they have taken this step without consulting Jehovah, their Father.

that take counsel] Rather, **that carry out a plan.**

that cover with a covering] R.V. gives in the margin two translations, between which it is difficult to choose: either **that weave a web** or **that pour out a drink-offering**. The latter is perhaps preferable, although the noun does not occur elsewhere with the sense of "libation" (see xxv. 7, xxviii. 20, "covering"). The allusion would be to drink-offerings accompanying the conclusion of a treaty (comp. *σπονδή* = libation with *σπονδαί* = covenant).

not of (with) my spirit] i.e. not in accordance with the spirit of prophecy speaking through Isaiah.

that they may add sin to sin] the sin of concealment to the original sin of dallying with secular alliances.

2. *and have not asked at my mouth*] "have not consulted my prophet" (for the expression cf. Josh. ix. 14; Gen. xxiv. 57).

to strengthen themselves...Egypt] Rather: **to take refuge in the refuge of Pharaoh, and to hide in the shadow of Egypt.**

3. *strength...trust*] **refuge...hiding**; as v. 2.

4, 5. On Zoan, see on ch. xix. 11. *Hanes* is identified with Herculopolis magna (Egyptian *Hnes*, still called *Ahnás*), situated to the south of Memphis on an island in the Nile. Zoan and Hanes thus mark the extreme limits of Lower Egypt, which was at this time ruled by a number of petty potentates, amongst whom the prince of Sais held

And his ambassadors came to Hanes.

- 5 They were all ashamed of a people *that* could not profit them,
Nor be a help nor profit,
But a shame, and also a reproach.

- 6 The burden of the beasts of the south :
Into the land of trouble and anguish,

a kind of primacy and assumed the title of Pharaoh (*v.* 2 f.). If the "princes" and "ambassadors" are those of Judah, the meaning would be that the embassy would visit all the little courts of the Delta from North to South and meet with a discouraging reception. There are two objections to this interpretation, (1) Judah has not been mentioned in the preceding context and (2) Isaiah's contention appears to be, not that the Judæan overtures would be coldly received, but that the Egyptians would be ready enough to promise but slack in performance. It is more natural to suppose that the "his" refers to Pharaoh, in which case *v.* 4 must be read as the protasis to *v.* 5, the sense being "Great as the extent of the Pharaoh's sphere of influence may be, yet nothing but shame will come to those who trust in his help." Render thus: (4) **For though his (Pharaoh's) princes are in Zoan and his messengers reach to Hanes, (5) Yet all come to shame through a people of no profit to them, that brings no help and no profit but shame and also reproach.**

The reading "come to shame" is that of the Massoretic punctuation (Qêrê). The consonantal text (Kêthîb) has a much harsher word—"become stinking." The perfect is that of experience.

6, 7. These verses are marked as an independent oracle by a heading in the enigmatic style of those in ch. xxi., xxii. Some commentators regard the title as an editorial note which has crept into the text from the margin; but the substance of the oracle, which is a parallel to, rather than a continuation of, *vv.* 1—5, favours the supposition that it was originally distinct. From the analogy of xxi. 1, 13, xxii. 1, we should expect the superscription to be suggested by some striking phrase in the body of the prophecy. There is, however, nothing in the text as it stands to suggest "beasts of the south." "The south" means the Negeb, the desert region to the south of Judah, traversed by the Jewish ambassadors on their way to Egypt. The "beasts" might be either the beasts of burden painfully making their way through it (*v.* 6) or the wild animals by which it is haunted (*v.* 6). That the expression refers to the hippopotamus (Job xl. 15) as a symbol of Egypt is a hazardous speculation. The text is probably corrupt, and Duhm's suggestion that the title reproduces some lost words at the beginning of the oracle is probably on the right track, although his proposed reconstruction may not command assent.

6. *trouble and anguish*] Better perhaps **distress and hardship**, cf. Deut. viii. 15; Jer. ii. 6.

From whence *come* the young and old lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent,
They will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young
asses,
And their treasures upon the bunches of camels,
To a people *that* shall not profit *them*.
For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose : 7
Therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength
is to sit still.

Now go, write it before them in a table,
And note it in a book,

8

the young and old lion] R.V. **the lioness and the lion**. Hebrew (like Arabic) possesses a superfluity of synonyms for the lion.

fiery flying serpent] **winged Saraph**. See on vi. 2, xiv. 29; cf. Num. xxi. 6. These are some of the terrors braved by the Jewish envoys in the prosecution of their foolhardy enterprise.

they will carry (R.V. **they carry**) *their riches, &c.*] The ambassadors take with them a whole caravan of presents to the Egyptian courts.

7. *For the Egyptians...purpose*] Render **And as for Egypt—their help is vain and empty**. Cf. vv. 3, 5.

have I cried concerning this] Better, **have I called her** (R.V.).

Their strength is to sit still] R.V. **Rahab that sitteth still**, lit. “Rahab, they are a sitting still,” or “Rahab are they, a sitting still.” The sentence is almost hopelessly obscure. “Rahab” is the name of a mythological monster, a sea-dragon (ch. li. 9; Job ix. 13, xxvi. 12), which became a symbol of Egypt (Ps. lxxxvii. 4, lxxxix. 10), although that use may be based on this verse. Etymologically it signifies “insolent arrogance” (the root occurs in ch. iii. 5); and probably all three senses are combined in this instance. The general sense may be, “This proud boastful monster—its proper name is ‘Inaction’.”

8. What is it that Isaiah is here directed to commit to writing? According to Delitzsch, the contents of the short oracle, vv. 6, 7; according to others, merely the pithy sentence with which it closes. That is not impossible; the mention of a “tablet” indicates some short and striking inscription. But since a “book” is mentioned along with the tablet, it is probable that Isaiah at this time wrote down a summary of all his deliverances on the subject of the Egyptian alliance. Not improbably the “book” so prepared was the basis of the present collection of prophecies, ch. xxviii.—xxxii. The incident is closely parallel to that referred to in ch. viii. 16, where Isaiah prepares documentary evidence of his prophetic actions after his advice had been rejected by the court and people.

For go read go in—“retire to thy house.”

note it should be **inscribe it** as R.V.

- That it may be for the time to come
For ever and ever:
- 9 That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children,
Children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD:
- 10 Which say to the seers, See not;
And to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right *things*,
Speak unto us smooth *things*,
Prophesy deceits:
- 11 Get ye out of the way,
Turn aside out of the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.
- 12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel,
Because ye despise this word,
And trust in oppression and perverseness,

for the time to come for ever and ever] Render **for a future day for a witness** (R.V. marg.) **for ever**. The pointing has to be altered in accordance with most ancient versions.

9—11. The documents (as in viii. 16) are a protest against the persistent disobedience of the people. Render with R.V. **For it is**, &c.

9. *lying children*] or **faithless sons**; see on ch. i. 2, cf. Mal. i. 6.
the law] **the instruction**, as ch. i. 10.

10. *the seers*] (1 Sam. ix. 9.)

the prophets] The word rightly rendered "seer" in Am. vii. 12 and elsewhere. See on i. 1. The prophets referred to can hardly (in view of v. 11) be merely the false prophets, who were at the beck and call of the people, but all representatives of the prophetic office. Cf. Am. ii. 12, vii. 12; Hcs. ix. 7, 8; Mic. ii. 6, 11, iii. 5, 11; Jer. vi. 14, xiv. 13 ff.; Ezek. xiii. 10 ff.

deceits] **illusions**; the word is used only here. It is Isaiah's own estimate that is put into the mouth of the people.

11. *Get ye out of the way, turn aside...*] i.e. "Discontinue your hackneyed methods: adopt a more conciliatory tone, and do not seek to influence us by reiterated prophecies of evil."

cause the Holy One of Israel to cease] The meaning is not, of course, that the people disown Jehovah as the national deity, but that they repudiate Isaiah's conception of Him as the Holy One of Israel, and the teaching based on that conception.

12—14. The answer of "Israel's Holy One," whose revelation is thus challenged.

12. *this word*] the warnings against the Egyptian alliance.

oppression and perverseness (lit. "crookedness")] The first word is explained of the oppressive war taxation necessitated by the policy now finally decided on; this is not altogether obvious, and some prefer, by transposing two consonants, to read "perverseness and crookedness." The same words are conjoined in Prov. ii. 15.

And stay thereon :

Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ¹³
ready to fall,

Swelling out in a high wall,

Whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' ¹⁴
vessel

That is broken in pieces; he shall not spare :

So that there shall not be found in the bursting of it
a sheard

To take fire from the hearth,

Or to take water *withal* out of the pit.

For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; ¹⁵

In returning and rest shall ye be saved;

In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength :

And ye would not.

But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; ¹⁶

Therefore shall ye flee :

13. Disaster will follow their policy with the necessity of a natural law. The best translation seems to be: **Therefore this guilt shall be to you as a rent descending** (lit. "falling") (and) **bulging out in a high wall, whose crash comes, &c.** The slight beginnings of transgression, its inevitable tendency to gravitate more and more from the moral perpendicular, till a critical point is reached, then the suddenness of the final catastrophe,—are vividly expressed by this magnificent simile. Comp. Ps. lxii. 3.

suddenly at an instant] Cf. ch. xxix. 5.

14. *he shall break it*] or: **it shall be broken.**

that is broken...spare] R.V. "breaking it in pieces without sparing"; better: **shivering it unsparingly** (Cheyne).

in the bursting of it] **among its fragments.** So completely will the Jewish state be shattered by the crooked policy of its leaders.

For *pit* read **cistern** (as R.V.).

15—17. The true policy contrasted with the false.

15 re-echoes the great ruling principle of Isaiah's statesmanship: comp. ch. vii. 4, 9, xxviii. 16. For *saith* read with R.V. **said.**

returning and rest...quietness and in confidence] The first expression describes the external policy, the second the attitude of mind, demanded by the occasion. On the one hand, averseness to war (Mic. ii. 8), renunciation of earthly help and a wise passivity in international affairs; on the other, calm reliance on Jehovah: in this last, the prophet says, they would have manifested the truest "strength" or courage.

16. *we will flee*] Translate: **we will fly** (against the enemy). The word, which in the next clause (as in every other instance) means "flee," is chosen because in Hebr. it resembles in sound the word for "horses."

- And, We will ride upon the swift;
 Therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.
 17 One thousand *shall flee* at the rebuke of one;
 At the rebuke of five shall ye flee:
 Till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain,
 And as an ensign on a hill.
- 18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that *he* may be
 gracious unto you,
 And therefore will he be exalted, that *he* may have
 mercy upon you:
 For the LORD *is* a God of judgment:
 Blessed *are* all they that wait for him.
 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem:
 Thou shalt weep no more:
 He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of
 thy cry;
 When *he* shall hear it, he will answer thee.

upon the swift] (coursers). In ch. xxxvi. 8 the Rabshakeh seems to taunt the Judæans with their childish fondness for horsemanship.

17. Their flight will be disgraceful. The words *at the rebuke of five* seem to weaken the force of the preceding hyperbole; hence some critics would insert "a myriad" in the second clause, after Lev. xxvi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 30.

beacon means "flag-staff" (elsewhere "mast"), cf. ch. xxxiii. 23.

18 is frequently explained as a concluding threat—"Therefore will the Lord wait before having mercy on you"; will postpone your deliverance. But this interpretation does violence to the terms of the verse, which is really the introduction of a new section, full of glorious promises. The "waiting" of Jehovah is that of anxious expectancy for the opportune moment of intervention; His "exaltation" denotes His readiness to act. The emendation "he will be silent" for "he will be exalted" is unnecessary. It is difficult, however, to explain the conjunction "therefore," after v. 17; unless we can hold that it has adversative force (= "even under these circumstances," "nevertheless"). The new passage seems to belong to a different time, and to continue another train of thought: see xxix. 15—24.

a God of judgment] or "justice."

that wait for him] Cf. ch. viii. 17; Ps. xxxiii. 20, &c.

19. The answer to prayer.

For the people shall dwell...] Rather **For, O people in Zion that dwellest in Jerusalem.**

thou shalt weep no more...gracious] **weep thou shalt not, he will surely be gracious.**

And *though* the Lord give you the bread of adversity, ²⁰
and the water of affliction,
Yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner
any more,
But thine eyes shall see thy teachers:
And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, ²¹
This *is* the way, walk ye in it,
When ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to
the left.
Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images ²²
of silver,
And the ornament of thy molten images of gold:
Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth;
Thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.
Then shall he give the rain of thy seed,
That thou shalt sow the ground withal; ²³

20, 21. The restoration of religious privileges and instruction.

20. *the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction*] (cf. 1 Ki. xxii. 27) the most meagre necessities of existence. The reference is to the period of distress (perhaps the siege) which *precedes* the great deliverance.

shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner] Rather: **shall not thy Teacher (God) hide Himself**; (nearly as R.V. marg.). The alternative rendering "teachers" is no doubt possible, but the verb is in the singular, and the conception of Jehovah as the personal teacher of His people, although surprising, gives the fullest meaning to the expressions of this verse and the next, and is not too exalted for a description of the Messianic age. If the other view be adopted, the reference must be to the prophets, who are now driven into concealment, but shall then freely appear in public. But such an anticipation has no parallel in Messianic prophecy, and certainly receives no light from the circumstances of Isaiah's time.

21. *thine ears shall hear a word behind thee*] that of Jehovah, walking like a Father behind His children. Cf. xxix. 18.

22. The renunciation of idolatry.

Ye shall defile] i.e. "desecrate" (2 Ki. xxiii. 8 ff.).

covering...ornament] **Overlaying...plating**, as R.V. An idol consisted of a core of wood or inferior metal, overlaid with a costly layer of silver or gold. The latter part was of course the most valuable, and perhaps also the most sacred (see Deut. vii. 25 f.).

cast them away, &c.] **scatter them as an unclean thing**; Ex. xxxii. 20.

23—26. The temporal blessings of the new dispensation.

23. *the rain of thy seed*] the "early rain" falling in the month of October.

- And bread of the increase of the earth,
 And it shall be fat and plenteous:
 In that day shall thy cattle feed *in* large pastures.
 24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the
 ground
 Shall eat clean provender,
 Which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with
 the fan.
 25 And there shall be upon every high mountain,
 And upon every high hill,
 Rivers *and* streams of waters in the day of the great
 slaughter,
 When the towers fall.
 26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light
 of the sun,
 And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold,
 As the light of seven days,
 In the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of
 his people,

bread of the increase of the earth] Perhaps: "bread-corn (xxviii. 28) the produce of the ground." Cf. ch. xxxvii. 30.

24. Comp. Paul's "Doth God take care for oxen?" (1 Cor. ix. 9). *that ear*] (the obsolete English word for "plough"), strictly *till*, R.V. *clean provender*] *salted fodder*, i.e. the best fodder (Job vi. 5) mixed with grains of salt. The devotion of cattle to salt in any form is well known. Gesenius quotes an Arabic proverb which says that "sweet fodder is the camel's bread, salted fodder is his comfit." The word for "fodder" (*bēll*) is usually explained as "mixture" (*farrago*) of corn with beans, vetches, &c. According to Wetzstein (in Delitzsch's *Comm.* on this verse) it means "ripe barley." In Syriac it denotes "fresh corn."

winnowed with the shovel and with the fan] i.e. prepared with the utmost care. The modern Arabic equivalent of the word rendered "fan" denotes a six-pronged fork (Wetzstein, in Delitzsch's *Isaiah*, 2nd ed.). As to the process see on ch. xvii. 13.

25. Even the arid slopes of the hills of Palestine shall then flow with water.

slaughter, when the towers fall] cf. ch. ii. 12 ff. It is a vague poetic allusion to the day of the Lord, when all His enemies are destroyed.

26. *moon* and *sun* are, in the original, poetic epithets (see on xxiv. 23).

as the light of seven days] the light of a whole week concentrated in one day. But the clause is wanting in the LXX., and being redundant is probably a late gloss.

And healeth the stroke of their wound.

Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, 27
 Burning *with* his anger, and the burden *thereof* is
 heavy:

His lips are full of indignation,
 And his tongue as a devouring fire:
 And his breath, as an overflowing stream, 28
 Shall reach to the midst of the neck,

To sift the nations with the sieve of vanity:
 And *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people,
 causing *them* to err.

Ye shall have a song, as *in* the night when a holy 29
 solemnity is kept;

bindeth up the breach...wound] Cf. ch. i. 6.

27, 28. These verses describe the Theophany, in which Jehovah appears to destroy the Assyrians, cf. Jud. v. 4, 5; Ps. xviii. 7 ff. l. 3—5.

27. *the name of the LORD*] appears here to be synonymous with what is elsewhere called the “glory of Jehovah” (cf. the parallelism, ch. lix. 19; Ps. cii. 15) i.e. the visible manifestation of His presence. It may have the same sense in ch. xviii. 7, the Temple of the future being conceived as the scene of a perpetual Theophany (Ezek. xliii. 2 ff.). Amongst the later Jews the expression “the Name” was commonly used, out of reverence, to avoid the use of Jehovah (cf. Lev. xxiv. 11).

cometh from far] In Jud. v. 4; Deut. xxxiii. 2, the Theophany comes from Seir or Sinai; here its origin is left indefinite. Jehovah’s coming is like that of the thundercloud which appears on the distant horizon, no eye having observed the mysterious process by which it was formed. In what follows the figure of the storm is inseparably blended with an anthropomorphic representation of Jehovah.

and the burden thereof is heavy] Render: **and with thick uplifting (of smoke)** (Cheyne). R.V. “in thick rising smoke.” Cf. Jud. xx. 38. *full of indignation*] Perhaps “full of angry foam.”

28. Render with R.V. **and his breath is as an overflowing stream that reacheth** (lit. “divideth”) **even unto the neck**, &c. (cf. ch. viii. 8). *to sift* (lit. “swing”) [*the*] **nations with the sieve of vanity** (or “ruin”)] i.e. to sift them until they are annihilated.

and there shall be a bridle...err] Better: **and (he shall be) a bridle that causeth to err, in the jaws of peoples**; i.e. Jehovah by His providence, turns the Assyrians aside from their purpose, and frustrates their enterprise.

29—32. Songs of rejoicing arise within the city, while the Assyrians are slaughtered under its walls.

29. *Ye shall have a song*] lit. “the song shall be to you.” Undoubtedly, the song is sung by the Israelites, not by an angelic choir, as is strangely suggested by Duhm. The song will be like that **in the**

And gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe
To come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty
One of Israel.

30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard,
And shall shew the lighting down of his arm,
With the indignation of *his* anger,
And *with* the flame of a devouring fire,
With scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian
be beaten down,
Which smote with a rod.

32 And *in* every *place* where the grounded staff shall pass,
Which the LORD shall lay upon him,
It shall be with tabrets and harps:
And in battles of shaking will he fight with it.

night when a feast is hallowed (R.V. marg.). The feast is probably the Passover, the only festival which, so far as we know, included a nocturnal ceremony, in the O.T. times. That singing then formed a part of the ritual (as in the time of Christ: Matt. xxvi. 30), cannot be proved, but it is not unlikely that this was the case. The reason why this particular festival is selected for comparison may be that it commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It is thought by many that the "Song of Moses," Ex. xv., was used as a Paschal hymn.

as when one goeth with a pipe] Or: **like his who marches with a flute**, &c. (cf. 1 Ki. i. 40); in other words, "who takes part in a festal procession to the Temple."

the mighty One of Israel] **the Rock of Israel** (R.V.), 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

30. *his glorious voice*] Perhaps: **the majesty of His thunder** (Ps. xxix. 3 ff.).

the lighting down] The word probably comes from the (Aramaic) verb used in Ps. xxxviii. 2. It may, however, be derived from the verb "to rest," the causative of which is rendered "lay upon" in v. 32.

with the indignation of his anger] **with furious anger**.

scattering] R.V. a blast. The word does not occur elsewhere; it is probably a poetic name for a storm.

For *tempest* read **rain storm**.

31. Assyria is here named for the first time as the object of the judgment. The *voice* of Jehovah is the thunder, as in v. 30. For *beaten down* render **panic-stricken**.

which smote with a rod] (cf. ch. x. 24) Or "when He (Jehovah) smites with the rod."

32. The verse may be translated as in R.V. **And every stroke of the appointed staff which the Lord shall lay upon him shall be with tabrets and harps; and in battles of shaking will he fight with them.** The expression "grounded staff" is, however, barely intelli-

For Tophet *is* ordained of old;
 Yea, for the king it is prepared;
 He hath made *it* deep *and* large:
 The pile thereof *is* fire and much wood;
 The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone,
 doth kindle it.

33

gible; the emendation "staff of correction" (Prov. xxii. 15) only replaces one singular expression by another, and is besides too easy to be worth much. The phrase "battles of shaking" is also difficult. "Battles of the swinging (of Jehovah's rod)" is the construction usually put upon it, but the sense is rhetorically weak. The word for "shaking" is the technical term for the "wave offering" in the Law (e.g. Lev. vii. 30); hence Ewald renders "battles of wave-offering," i.e. battles in which Assyria is devoted to destruction.

33. *For Tophet is ordained of old*] Render: **For a burning-place is already laid out.** Tophet is the name of a spot in the valley of the son of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where human sacrifices were offered to the god Melek or Molek (2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31 f., xix. 6, 13). According to Prof. Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 377) the word was originally pronounced *Tēphath*, and, like its equivalents in Aramaic and Arabic, meant simply "fireplace." This view seems preferable to the common derivation, which explains it as a term of contempt ("spitting" Job xvii. 6); and it accounts for the generic sense which the word undoubtedly has in this passage (where, however, a bye-form *tophteh* is used). "The Tophet" was so-called because the most distinctive feature of the revolting rites there practised was the burning of the victims in a great pit dug in the ground, which constituted the "fireplace."

yea, for the king it is prepared] lit. "even it is prepared for the king" (not "even for the king it is prepared"). The "king" might be either the king of Assyria, or the god "Melek" (Molech), or a play of words alluding to both. But a "witty allusion" in such a passage leads us to suspect the hand of a glossator. The objection to understanding it of the king of Assyria is that the emphasis rests on "it" and not on "the king."

the pile thereof] Cf. Ezek. xxiv. 9. For "fire" some other word must have been used; perhaps "coals of fire" (נְחֹלִי omitted before אֵשׁ).

CH. XXXI. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF HUMAN HELP: THE CERTAINTY OF DIVINE PROTECTION.

The alliance with Egypt (now apparently consummated) is again the starting point of this fifth "Woe." As in ch. xxix. 5—7, there is some uncertainty as to where the transition from denunciation to promise takes place; but the best division seems to be as follows:—

i. vv. 1—4. The false confidence of the politicians in the strength of Egypt (1) is rebuked by an appeal to the infinite contrast between

- 31 Woe to them that go down *to* Egypt for help;
 And stay on horses,
 And trust in chariots, because *they are* many;
 And in horsemen, because they are very strong;
 But they look not unto the Holy One of Israel,
 Neither seek the LORD.
- 2 Yet he also *is* wise, and will bring evil,
 And will not call back his words:
 But will arise against the house of the evildoers,
 And against the help of them that work iniquity.
- 3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God;
 And their horses flesh, and not spirit.

the wisdom and resources of the Almighty and all human craft and power (2, 3). In a very striking figure the prophet represents Jerusalem as the helpless prey in the grasp of Jehovah, and shews how impossible it is that any earthly power should intervene for its deliverance (4).

ii. vv. 5—9. Yet Jehovah will protect and spare Jerusalem (5). If Israel would but repent and turn to Him whom they have forsaken, Who alone is God, able to save them! (6, 7). The Assyrian shall be destroyed by Jehovah's personal intervention (8, 9).

1. Woe to them that put their trust in the horses and chariots of Egypt! The Jews were painfully conscious of their weakness in cavalry as compared with the Assyrians, and this was one of the considerations that made a league with Egypt so attractive in their eyes (see ch. xxx. 16, xxxvi. 8, 9). Egypt was always renowned in antiquity for its strength in this arm (Hom. *Iliad* ix. 383; Diodorus, i. 45). To the prophets horses and chariots were in themselves objectionable as embodiments of irreligious militarism (cf. ch. ii. 7); they were of course doubly so when obtained through compacts with foreign states.

neither seek the LORD] i.e. seek His counsel (xxx. 2).

2, 3. A demonstration of the folly of trusting Egypt rather than Jehovah.

2. *Yet he also is wise*] as well as the shrewd diplomatists who have negotiated this treaty! The words are ironical, yet they have a serious meaning; the prophet, alone in his view of the political situation, reassures himself by thinking of the transcendent wisdom of Jehovah and the fixity of His purpose.

and will bring evil] Rather, **brings trouble** (cf. Am. iii. 6) in consequence of His wisdom.

and will not call back (better: **and hath not recalled**) *his words*] The "words" are such prophecies as xxviii. 16 ff., xxix. 14 ff., xxx. 13 f., 16 ff.

the house of [the] evildoers is Judah (ch. i. 4); their *help* (i.e. "helpers") is Egypt.

3. *men, and not God...flesh, and not spirit*] In these antitheses Isaiah formulates his religious conception of history. The present

When the LORD shall stretch out his hand,
 Both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen
 shall fall down,
 And they all shall fail together.
 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me,
 Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his
 prey,
 When a multitude of shepherds is called forth against
 him,
 He will not be afraid of their voice,
 Nor abase himself for the noise of them:
 So shall the LORD of hosts come down

crisis has not been brought about by the mere collision of earthly forces (Egypt, Assyria, Judah); faith discerns in it the operation of a spiritual principle, and knows that that principle must be victorious. "Spirit" is the energetic indestructible element in the universe, by which all life is sustained; and that which is distinctive of the teaching of Isaiah and the prophets generally is (1) the identification of this principle with the moral purpose of Jehovah, and (2) the assertion of the supremacy of the spiritual, thus ethically conceived, over the material. That men could not stand against God, or flesh against spirit, Isaiah's contemporaries did not need to be taught; what separated him from his hearers was the conviction that there is but one Divine Person, and one spiritual power in the universe, viz.: Jehovah and His moral government as revealed in the consciousness of the prophet. Hence he continues:—**And Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, and the helper (Egypt) shall stumble and the holpen (Judah) shall fall; and together they shall all of them perish.**

4. The verse reads: **As the lion growls, and the young lion over his prey, against whom the whole band of shepherds has been called out—he is not terrified by their cry, nor dismayed at their shouting—so Jehovah of Hosts will come down, &c.** Compare with this truly Homeric simile *Jl.* XVIII. 161 f., XII. 299 ff. It is unfortunate that so graphic an image should be thought capable of two diametrically opposite interpretations. According to many commentators it expresses Jehovah's determination to defend Jerusalem against the Assyrians. But the figure would certainly be "ill-chosen" if the lion were represented as protecting his prey and the shepherds as anxious to destroy it. The only natural construction is that Jehovah (through the Assyrians, as in xxix. 3, 4) will hold Jerusalem helpless in His power as the lion holds his prey; though the noisy crowd of shepherds (the Egyptians) try to scare him away. The only advantage of the other view is that the transition from threatening to promise would be somewhat less abrupt at the beginning of v. 4 than at the beginning of v. 5; but that is not a sufficient reason for straining the figure in the way proposed.

- To fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.
 5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend
 Jerusalem;
 Defending also he will deliver *it*;
 And passing over he will preserve *it*.
- 6 Turn ye unto *him from* whom the children of Israel
 have deeply revolted.
 7 For in that day every man shall cast away
 His idols of silver, and his idols of gold,
 Which your own hands have made unto you *for* a sin.
 8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a
 mighty man;
 And the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him:
 But he shall flee from the sword,

to fight for mount Zion, and for] Render: **to fight against...and against**, as in every other case where the phrase occurs (ch. xxix. 7, 8; Num. xxxi. 7; Zech. xiv. 12). The translation "upon mount Zion and upon" is only adopted in order to maintain the favourable construction of the verse.

5. Jehovah's protection of Jerusalem is expressed by a very different figure—that of birds hovering over their nests. The word for *birds* denotes especially small, sparrow-like, birds; and its use here might seem less appropriate than in Ps. xi. 1 as a synonym for timidity. It is, however, frequently used of birds in general (e.g. Ps. viii. 8).

passing over] The verb is that from which the word *Pesah* (Passover) is derived; it occurs again only in Ex. xii. 13, 23, 27. For *preserve* read **rescue**.

6 contains the only summons to repentance in this whole series of discourses. It must not be understood as implying that the deliverance of Jerusalem is conditional upon a national repentance. The verse is connected with v. 7; and the thought is that the approaching deliverance will be a decisive manifestation of the sole deity of Jehovah, which will put idolatry to shame; and therefore the prophet calls on his hearers to realise the magnitude of their sin in having forsaken the one true God.

have deeply revolted] cf. i. 5. In spite of the change from second to third person (cf. i. 29, v. 8), the words *children of Israel* should probably be translated as a vocative.

7. Comp. xxx. 22, xvii. 8, ii. 8 and esp. ii. 20.

8, 9. The discomfiture of the Assyrians will be accomplished by Jehovah Himself. The connexion with what precedes is not very close.

8. *not of a mighty man...mean man]* R.V. **not of man...men** (see on ch. ii. 9). Lit. "of a Not-man...Not-mortal," i.e. a superhuman sword.

And his young men shall be discomfited.
 And he shall pass over *to* his strong hold for fear,
 And his princes shall be afraid of the ensign,
 Saith the LORD, whose fire *is* in Zion,
 And his furnace in Jerusalem.

shall be discomfited] R.V. shall become tributary, "be subjected to bond-service," as 1 Kings ix. 21 f., &c.

9. *he shall pass over to his strong hold*] The clause is difficult. R.V. and A.V. marg. take "his Rock" as subj., "Rock" being a figurative designation either of the king of Assyria or its national deity. This view has nothing to commend it. The A.V. gives a good sense, but a better translation perhaps is: "he shall overpass his rock(-refuge) from terror," the image being that of a hunted animal, which misses its accustomed hiding-place in its fright.

his princes shall be afraid of the ensign] This rendering might be explained by ch. xviii. 3: the Assyrian officers shall be affrighted at the signal which Jehovah sets up. A better rendering, however, is: **his officers shall be frightened away from the standard**, i.e. "even the officers shall desert the standard in panic" (a pregnant construction).

whose fire is...Jerusalem] Better: **who hath a fire in Zion and a furnace** (lit. "oven") in Jerusalem. There is perhaps an allusion here to the meaning of "Ariel" in ch. xxix. 1 ff. The expressions symbolise the two aspects of Jehovah's presence in Zion, light to His friends and destruction to His enemies (as Ex. xiv. 20). The "oven" is an emblem of the Divine anger in Ps. xxi. 9; perhaps also in Gen. xv. 17.

CH. XXXII. 1—8. THE IDEAL COMMONWEALTH OF THE MESSIANIC AGE.

This passage, although treated by many expositors as the continuation of ch. xxxi., bears all the marks of an independent prophecy. Its insertion in the present group of discourses is sufficiently explained by the picture it gives of a reformed upper class, in contrast with the irreligious and unscrupulous nobility against whom the previous chapters have been mainly directed. The time of its actual composition cannot be determined with certainty, but it is perhaps most naturally assigned to the close of Isaiah's ministry, when his mind was occupied with the hope of the ideal future. Much has been made of the fact that the figure of the Messianic King (v. 1) is less idealised than in the great prophecies of ch. ix. 1—6 and xi. 1—4. But this circumstance is easily accounted for by the leading idea of the prophecy (which is the transformation of social relationships), and cannot be safely used as a criterion of date. Still less does it furnish an argument against the Isaianic authorship of the passage. It is true, however, that in its somewhat laboured didactic style, and in the terms employed, the passage differs widely from anything else in the acknowledged writings of Isaiah; and the suggestion that it may have owed its final literary form to a later hand cannot be altogether ignored.

- 32 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule in judgment.
- 2 And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind,
And a covert from the tempest;
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
- 3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim,
And the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

The contents of the prophecy are as follows:—

(1) vv. 1, 2. A perfectly just and beneficent government will be established; king and nobles alike being endowed with the virtues necessary for their office, and yielding protection to the poor.

(2) vv. 3, 4. Public opinion also will be enlightened and purified; the people will no longer be misled by false and superficial judgments, but even the most ignorant will be gifted with the faculty of sound moral discernment.

(3) vv. 5—8. The consequences of this will be that “the aristocracy of birth and wealth will be replaced by an aristocracy of character” (Delitzsch); men will find their proper level and be estimated at their true worth (5). To this is appended an analysis of the two contrasted types, the “churl” and the true nobleman (6—8).

1, 2. It is characteristic of Isaiah that the renovation of society is represented as commencing at the top, with the king and aristocracy. (Cf. ch. i. 26, iii. 1—7.) The ideal king has already been described (ch. ix. 6, 7, xi. 1—4) as supernaturally endowed with the virtues of a perfect ruler; here the emphasis lies on the manifestation of these qualities in righteous government; and this, according to the constitutional principles of Isaiah’s time, required an order of state officials animated by the same spirit as the king himself.

1. *and princes shall rule*] Some render emphatically: “and as for princes—they shall rule,” on account of a preposition in the Hebr.; but this is probably only a copyist’s error. On “righteousness” and “judgment,” see ch. i. 21; cf. xi. 4, 5.

2. *For a man read each one* (of the princes). The meaning of the figure is that every great man, instead of being a tyrant and oppressor of the poor (xxix. 20 f.), shall be a protection against calamity and a source of beneficent activity.

from the tempest] *from the rain storm*; cf. ch. iv. 6.

the shadow of a great (lit. “heavy”) *rock*] cooler than that of a tree. Frequently cited parallels (since Gesenius) are the *σκιά πετραίη* of Hesiod (*Works*, 589) and the “saxea umbra” of Vergil (*Georg.* III. 145).

3, 4. The quickening of the moral perceptions of the people. Comp. ch. xxix. 18, 24, xxx. 20 f.

3. *shall not be dim*] *shall not be closed* (R.V. marg.). The verb, although disguised in the pointing, is no doubt the same as that used in ch. vi. 10, xxix. 10 (lit. “smear”). The curse there pronounced shall be removed.

The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, 4
And the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to
speak plainly.

The vile person shall be no more called liberal, 5
Nor the churl said *to be* bountiful.

For the vile person will speak villany, 6
And his heart will work iniquity,
To practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the
LORD,

To make empty the soul of the hungry,
And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
The instruments also of the churl *are* evil: 7

He deviseth wicked devices
To destroy the poor with lying words,
Even when the needy speaketh right.

4. *the rash*] i.e. the hasty, inconsiderate person, who constantly blurts out crude and ill-judged opinions. The *stammerers*, on the other hand, are those who, even when their thoughts are right, lack the gift of clear utterance. To the former class is promised "understanding," to the latter the power to speak promptly and "plainly" (lit. *lucidities*). Sound judgment and fluent speech combine to form a good popular orator.

5. True and false nobility shall no longer be confounded because of artificial caste-distinctions.

The vile person] or, *the fool*; see the typical specimen, Nabal by name and by nature, in 1 Sam. xxv.

liberal] Better: *noble* (in rank). The word denotes, first, one of generous, self-sacrificing disposition; and then one of noble degree; Num. xxi. 18 and often.

The word rendered *churl* occurs only here (and v. 7), and its meaning is uncertain. The view adopted by most commentators derives it from a root signifying guile or craftiness (hence Cheyne well renders *knave*). *bountiful* represents another rare word (only Job xxxiv. 19 [E.V. "rich"]), perhaps *man of substance*.

6—8. The two types contrasted in their conduct.

6. The characteristics of the "fool." Render: **For a fool speaks folly and his heart works (LXX. "meditates") mischief, to practise impiety (cf. ix. 17) and to speak error (xxix. 24) against Jehovah, &c.** The fool here depicted is a free thinker, a practical atheist, as in Ps. xiv. 1; the baneful effect of his principles is seen in his conduct towards his fellow-men, in his pitiless and cruel selfishness.

to make empty...] to deprive the destitute of their scanty subsistence.

7. *The instruments*] i.e. the weapons or methods, of the knave. The word is chosen because of its close similarity to that for "knave" (*kēlai* — *kēlāv*). On these machinations of the knave, see ch. xxix. 21.

even when the needy speaketh right] in a forensic sense (= "speaks with right on his side").

- 8 But the liberal deviseth liberal *things*;
And by liberal *things* shall he stand.

8. *But the liberal (the noble man) deviseth liberal (noble) things—and thereby evinces genuine nobility.*

by liberal things...] Better: **in noble things doth he continue** (nearly as R.V.). His generous impulses are sustained in his conduct.

CH. XXXII. 9—20. TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM.

Like the previous sections (xxix. 1 ff., 15 ff., xxx., xxxi.) this passage is divided into two parts,—the announcement of judgment on Jerusalem, and a description of the Messianic salvation (see the analysis below). It presents, however, two remarkable peculiarities: (1) there is no reference to the overthrow of the Assyrians, and (2) it contemplates a complete destruction of Jerusalem and a protracted desolation of the land. For these reasons some critics have been led to assign the prophecy to a period much earlier than the invasion of Sennacherib; and this would be plausible if it were possible to separate the two parts of which it is composed (9—14 and 15—20). But this is difficult on account of the close connexion established by v. 15; and since the latter portion presents some literary affinities with the other members of this group of discourses (ch. xxviii.—xxxi.) it will probably be safer to regard the whole as belonging to the same period. It is possible, no doubt, that the Messianic conclusion might have been written later than the address to the women; but even on that assumption we should have to admit that the prophet retained the conception of an indefinitely prolonged depopulation of the land, at a late stage of his career.

The contents of the prophecy are as follows:—

i. vv. 9—14. A threatening oration, addressed to the women of Jerusalem. The introduction (v. 9) shews that what roused the ire of the prophet was the careless unconcern and indifference of the women in face of the reiterated warnings he had uttered. He endeavours to shake them out of their light-hearted security by the announcement that “the ingathering shall not come” (10). So clear is the vision of calamity that he calls on his hearers to adopt the attitude of mourners over the ravaged vineyards, the desolate fields, and the deserted palaces of the “jubilant city” (11—14).

ii. vv. 15—20. Out of this state of collapse and ruin there will ultimately arise, but after an indefinite period, a new world. Under the vivifying influence of the Divine spirit, external nature will be renewed (15), righteousness will dwell in the land (16), and its blessed fruits will be undisturbed peace and security (17, 18). An unexpected allusion to the judgment (19) somewhat mars the continuity of the passage, which ends with a prophetic felicitation of the peaceful and industrious peasantry who inherit the golden age (20).

9. The women are addressed partly as representing best certain aspects of the public mind, luxury and complacent ease (ch. iii. 16 ff.; Am. iv. 1 ff.); partly because of their function as mourners in seasons of calamity (Jer. ix. 20).

Rise up, ye women that are at ease, hear my voice; 9
Ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech.
Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless 10
women:

For the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.
Tremble, ye *women* that are at ease; be troubled, ye 11
careless ones:

Strip ye, and make ye bare, and gird *sackcloth* upon
your loins.

They *shall* lament for the teats,

12

that are at ease...careless] (or, **confident**) cf. Am. vi. 1.

10. *Many days and years*] The Hebr. reads literally "days beyond a year," probably a current popular phrase like "year and day." Both A.V. and R.V. regard the expression as accus. of duration, but the context shews that it fixes the point of time when ease and security give place to anxiety. The meaning is "in little more than a year." Comp. the less definite note of time in ch. xxix. 1.

The feature of the judgment which is emphasised is the failure of the vintage and the fruit harvest (*gathering*); what follows shews that this is not the result of natural causes, but of a wholesale devastation of the land. The significance of the prediction would depend greatly on the season of the year at which it was uttered; on any natural interpretation of his words, the prophet means to assert that the next year's harvest will never be gathered.

11. The speaker calls on his female auditors at once to assume the garb of mourners; so certain is the calamity. The word for "tremble" is in the masc. gender in the original, a not uncommon irregularity (Am. iv. 1; Mic. i. 13, &c.). Indeed the next verse presents an example.

strip ye, and make ye bare—as Arabian women occasionally do in a paroxysm of grief or terror.

gird (sc. *sackcloth*) *upon your loins*] Cf. ch. iii. 24; 1 Ki. xxi. 27; 2 Ki. vi. 30; Job xvi. 15.

The words "be troubled," "strip," "make bare" and "gird" represent anomalous forms in the Hebrew, which are the despair of grammarians. The imperative no doubt gives the right sense.

12. *They shall lament for the teats*] R.V. gives a better translation: **they shall smite upon the breasts**; but the construction is difficult. The verb is a masculine plural participle and signifies strictly "to mourn." The word for "breasts" might by a slight change of points be read as "fields"; hence some commentators think that the reference to the women is here abandoned, and render, "men shall mourn for the fields." If the R.V. is right we must suppose that the word "mourn" (like the Greek *κόπτεσθαι*) meant originally "smite upon (the breast)" and is here used in its literal sense. The clause would be somewhat more easily construed if read as the conclusion of v. 11 (Duhm, "smiting

For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.

- 13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns *and* briers;

Yea, upon all the houses of joy *in* the joyous city:

- 14 Because the palaces shall be forsaken;
The multitude of the city shall be left;
The forts and towers shall be for dens for ever,
A joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

- 15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high,
And the wilderness be a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

on the breasts"), but even with this change the masculine gender is exceedingly harsh.

13. *Upon the land...briers*] It is perhaps better to take this as continuing *v.* 12, rendering thus: **For the (cultivated) land of my people, which goes up in thorns and briers** (cf. ch. v. 6); **yea, for all, &c.** (The verb "goes up" is fem. and must have as its subj. the fem. "land"; "thorns" and "briers" are masc.)

the joyous city] (see on ch. xxii. 2) may be a genitive depending on "houses," or may be a parallel phrase, governed by "for."

14. Render: **For the palace is forsaken, the tumult of the city is a solitude** (as in ch. vi. 12), &c. The tenses are prophetic perfects.

the forts and towers] Better as in R.V.: **the hill and the watch tower.** The first word is '*Ophel*, the name of the southern projection of the hill on which the temple stood (Neh. iii. 26 f., xi. 21; 2 Chr. xxvii. 3, xxxiii. 14), and is doubtless mentioned as the aristocratic quarter of the city, near the royal palace. The word translated "watch tower" occurs nowhere else, and is of uncertain significance; probably, like *Ophel*, it denotes a particular locality in the capital.

The phrase *for ever* must be understood in a relative sense, being restricted by the "until" of *v.* 15.

The verse contains an absolute and explicit prediction of the complete overthrow of Jerusalem. Dillmann's assertion that such an expectation must have been expressed in different language is inexplicable, and his distinction between destruction and desolation is sophistical. Surprising as this idea may be alongside of certain passages in this section of the book, it is not to be explained away, and after all it does not go very much beyond what is said in ch. xxix. 4. For a complete parallel, however, we must go back to the early prophecy of ch. v. 14, 17.

15. At last the great transformation of all things will be ushered in, by an outpouring of *spirit* (the Heb. has no art.) *from on high*; i.e. from heaven, as in ch. xxxiii. 5. The spirit, conceived as a subtle essence descending upon and then permeating the human world, is said to be "poured out" as in ch. xxix. 10; Ezek. xxxix. 29; Joel ii. 28 f. (although different verbs are there used). Any supernatural influence, even when acting to the injury of man, might be so spoken of (ch. xix. 14,

Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, 16
 And righteousness remain in the fruitful field.
 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; 17
 And the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance
 for ever.

And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, 18
 And in sure dwellings,
 And in quiet resting places;
 When it shall hail, coming down *on* the forest; 19
 And the city shall be low in a low place.

Blessed *are* ye that sow beside all waters, 20
 That send forth *thither* the feet of the ox and the ass.

xxix. 10), just as a personal "spirit from Jehovah" may be evil or false (1 Sam. xvi. 14; 1 Ki. xxii. 21 ff.). Here the word is used absolutely and denotes the Divine principle of life, and especially the power by which the will of God is made to prevail in human society (*vv.* 16 f.).

On the second half of the verse see ch. xxix. 17.

16. "Judgment" and "righteousness," the foundations of social order (ch. i. 21, 26 f., xxviii. 17), shall then be established throughout the land. The "wilderness" (i.e. untilled pasture-land) is not annihilated, only pushed further into the desert proper; even there the reign of right extends.

17, 18. The consequence of this supremacy of righteousness is universal tranquillity and security,—a contrast to the false carnal security denounced in *vv.* 9, 11.

17. *work* and *effect* are synonyms; both mean literally "work," and both have the sense of "effect" (the latter only here used in this sense). [*quietness and assurance*] (R.V. **confidence**) cf. ch. xxx. 15.

19. The verse reads: **And it shall hail at the falling of the forest, and in lowliness shall the city be laid low.** According to most commentators the "forest" is a symbol for Assyria, as in ch. x. 18 f., 33 f. But this is suggested by nothing in the context, and the "city" in the next line cannot be Nineveh, which is never referred to by Isaiah, and is far from his thoughts here. The verse as a whole must (if genuine) be taken as an announcement of judgment on Jerusalem; but it comes in so awkwardly between *vv.* 18 and 20, that it may not unreasonably be regarded as an interpolation. On the "hail" as a synonym for Divine judgment see ch. xxviii. 2, 17, xxx. 30.

20. The prophet apostrophises the happy agricultural population of the renovated land of Israel. The sentiment may be in part due to his own delight in the avocations of the husbandman, but it has to be remembered that agricultural prosperity naturally holds a prominent place in Messianic prophecy, as the antithesis to the false refinements and military pomp of the civilisation that is to be swept away. The

- 33 Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou *wast* not spoiled;
 And dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!
 When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled;

features of the description are, the happiness of the people, the abundance of water for the irrigation of the fields, and immunity from danger, so that "the ox and the ass" can be safely driven out to pasture, without fear of their not returning (cf. ch. i. 3). The "thither" of the A.V. is a misleading insertion.

CH. XXXIII. THE PRESENT DISTRESS AND THE FUTURE GLORY OF JERUSALEM.

The last of the six "Woes" (see p. 206) is not addressed, like the others, to the ungodly rulers of Judah, but to some unnamed tyrant and "spoiler," by whom the land has been reduced to the utmost straits. The course of thought is as follows:

i. vv. 1—13 contain the prophet's appeal to Jehovah against the oppressors of his country. Commencing with a threat of retribution on the cruel and treacherous foe (v. 1), he turns for a moment in supplication to God, the only hope of Israel in this time of trouble (v. 2); and anticipates the speedy dispersion of the enemy before the presence of Jehovah (3, 4), Who has filled Zion with righteousness and judgment (5, 6).—At present the city is in the utmost distress through some perfidious act of the enemy; and the whole land lies waste, mourning in sympathy with its inhabitants (7—9).—But again the prophet's faith rises triumphant in the midst of danger; the voice of Jehovah is heard announcing the swift annihilation of the invaders (10—13).

ii. vv. 14—16. The effect of Jehovah's appearing on the two classes within the community; on the ungodly, who are seized with terror (14), and the righteous who dwell securely with the consuming fire of Divine holiness (15, 16).

iii. vv. 17—24. The poem concludes with a picture of the coming age, when the present danger shall be but a distant memory (18, 19). The description includes: the vision of the "King in his beauty," and a far-stretching peaceful land (17); the perfect security of Jerusalem, protected by Jehovah (20, 21); freedom from disease and forgiveness of sins, as privileges of the redeemed people (24).

If the chapter be Isaiah's, there can hardly be two opinions as to the circumstances in which it was composed. The unnamed enemy would necessarily be the Assyrian, and the scene pictured in v. 7 (the ambassadors of peace weeping bitterly) would seem to refer to some unrecorded embassy of Hezekiah, which must have returned from Lachish with the alarming intelligence that Sennacherib, violating every consideration of honour, insisted on the surrender of the capital (see Gen. Introd., p. xx). The prophecy would thus follow closely on ch. xxii. 1—14; and the striking contrast between the two passages might throw light on the prophet's change of attitude at this time. To this theory, which is in

And when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee :
 Be thou their arm every morning,
 Our salvation also in the time of trouble.
 At the noise of the tumult the people fled ;
 At the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.
 And your spoil shall be gathered *like* the gathering of
 the caterpillar :

many ways attractive, there are certain objections arising from the character of the passage. The style and imagery are both unlike Isaiah's, and the pathetic and plaintive tone of vv. 2, 8 f. is hardly in keeping with the decisiveness which marks all his utterances. Such a prayer as that in v. 2, where the author identifies himself with his people, is without parallel in the acknowledged writings of Isaiah. Some scholars have tried to explain these characteristics by the hypothesis that the chapter is the composition of a contemporary and disciple of the prophet, or a working up of Isaianic material by a later writer. Critics of a less conservative type pronounce the passage to be post-Exilic and refer it to some episode of the Jewish struggle for independence against the Persian or Syrian kings.

1. The enemy is described by epithets which recur in ch. xxi. 2, xxiv. 16. The obscurity of the reference is somewhat unlike Isaiah, who is usually perfectly explicit in his references to the Assyrian.

when thou shalt make an end] The Heb. verb used is supposed to mean "attain"; but it occurs nowhere else, and the reading is probably at fault. The substitution of a *Kaph* for the *Nun* gives the common verb *killāh*, "finish," which is the exact sense given by the E.V.

2. The nation's prayer to Jehovah. The writer seems to make himself the spokesman of the community, a thing which Isaiah rarely does (see xxxii. 15); nowhere, as here, in a prayer. Cheyne, however, suggests that he speaks in the name of his own disciples, for whose sake he prays that the whole nation may be spared.

be thou their arm] i.e. their strength and defence (Jer. xvii. 5). The force of the pronoun "their" is uncertain; some change it (needlessly perhaps) to "our." On the phrase "every morning," cf. ch. xxviii. 19.

3, 4. Assurance of Jehovah's victory, founded on the great deliverances of the past. The perfects in v. 3 may be either those of experience, expressing a general truth often verified in history, or of prophetic assurance. v. 4 seems to apply this truth to the present crisis.

3. *At the noise of the tumult*] the convulsions which attend the manifestation of Jehovah. The phrase is found in 1 Ki. xviii. 41 of a rain storm, and in Is. xiii. 4 of a multitudinous host.

4. *like the gathering of the caterpillar*] i.e. "as the caterpillar gathers." The last word (meaning "devourer") is one of many names for the locust. It is sometimes taken as gen. of obj. ("as men gather

As the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

- 5 The LORD *is* exalted; for he dwelleth on high:
He hath filled Zion *with* judgment and righteousness.
6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be
The stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation:
The fear of the LORD *is* his treasure.
7 Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without:

locusts"), the creature being an article of diet among the poorer classes in the East; but this is opposed to the next clause. On the "running" of the locust, see Joel ii. 9, where the same verb is employed. The locusts in the figure represent the Israelites (*v.* 23).

5, 6. The writer draws encouragement from two thoughts: (1) from the nature of Israel's God; He is a spiritual Being, dwelling on high, beyond the reach of His enemies: (2) from the spiritual blessings He has conferred on His people. The connexion of these two may be gathered from ch. xxxii. 15; it is the outpouring of "spirit from on high" that has produced the fruit of righteousness in the state. That Israel possesses a religion which is essentially spiritual appears to be the ultimate ground on which the expectation of deliverance is based.

5. *judgment and righteousness* can mean nothing else than personal and civic virtues in the inhabitants of the city. Isaiah could not have written thus of the Jerusalem he knew (*cf.* i. 21); if he is the author the words must express a vivid anticipation of the great change in the national character which is now on the eve of accomplishment.

6. The verse is difficult and may be construed in several ways. We might either render "and the stability of thy times shall be a store of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge" (virtually as R.V. marg.); or take the words "stability of thy times" as a complete sentence (see Davidson's *Synt.* § 3, Rem. 2), and translate as follows: **And there shall be stability in thy times; wisdom and knowledge are a store of salvation; the fear of Jehovah is his (Israel's) treasure.** The general idea is that a right religious attitude is the true strength of the nation and the pledge of its deliverance from all dangers. That the words "store" and "treasure" were suggested by the depleted treasury of Hezekiah is not a natural supposition.

The word *times* is used, as in Ps. xxxi. 15, in the sense of "predetermined lot."

7—9. For a moment the prophet's faith seems to relax its hold on the great principles he has enunciated, as he turns to contemplate the misery and desolation of the present. But in reality this is an additional plea for the Divine intervention, to be followed by the exultant outburst of *vv.* 10—13.

7. *their valiant ones*] This word is hopelessly obscure. It is usually translated "God's lions," i.e. 'picked warriors, each as fierce as a lion and as invincible as his God' (Cheyne: see on xxix. 1, and *cf.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 20; 1 Chr. xi. 22); and this is probably the sense intended by

The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.
 The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth : 8
 He hath broken the covenant,
 He hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.
 The earth mourneth *and* languisheth : 9
 Lebanon is ashamed *and* hewn down :
 Sharon is like a wilderness ;
 And Bashan and Carmel shake off *their* fruits.

Now will I rise, saith the LORD ; 10
 Now will I be exalted ;
 Now will I lift up myself.
 Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble : 11

E.V. Another suggestion is that it is a gentile name, meaning "inhabitants of Ariel." It is impossible to get beyond conjecture. The reading of the text ('*er'ellām*) appears to rest on a false etymology. It should probably be pointed as a simple plural, '*ar'ēlīm* or (if necessary) '*ārī'ēlīm*. The verbs *shall cry* and *shall weep* should both be translated as presents (R.V.).

the ambassadors of peace (omit *shall*) *weep bitterly*] Cf. ch. xxii. 4. Taken in connexion with the last half of v. 8, these words seem to point to the conclusion of a treaty of peace, which had been shamelessly violated by the enemy. Those immediately responsible for the arrangement are naturally loudest in their expression of dismay. We have no certain knowledge of such negotiations between Hezekiah and Sennacherib, although such an incident might very well have happened then.

8. *The highways lie waste....ceaseth*] cf. Jud. v. 6.

he hath broken the covenant] See on v. 7.

he hath despised the cities] For '*ārīm* (cities) Duhm proposes to read '*ēdīm* (witnesses), i.e. the witnesses to the broken treaty. There might no doubt be an allusion to the capture of the fenced cities of Judah, 2 Ki. xviii. 13.

9. *The earth mourneth and languisheth*] (cf. ch. xxiv. 4, 7) in sympathy with the distress of God's people. It is the language of poetry. The "earth" is neither the whole world, nor merely the land of Palestine ; its equivalent in modern parlance might be "Nature." The spots mentioned are those famous for their luxuriant vegetation, and the standing types of natural beauty and perennial verdure (cf. ch. xxxv. 2 ; Zech. xi. 2 ; Cant. vii. 4 f.). Instead of *hewn down* render with R.V. *withereth away*. The verb "shake off" requires an object to be supplied, but "their leaves" (as in R.V.) is decidedly better than "their fruits."

10—13. Jehovah's answer to the complaint and prayer of His people.

11. Still the words of Jehovah, addressed to the enemy. The present tense would be better than the future. For the first figure see ch. lix. 4 ; Job xv. 35 ; Ps. vii. 14.

Your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.

12 And the people shall be *as* the burnings of lime:

As thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire.

13 Hear, ye *that are* far off, what I have done;

And ye *that are* near, acknowledge my might.

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;

Fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites.

Who among us shall dwell *with* the devouring fire?

Who amongst us shall dwell *with* everlasting burnings?

15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly;

He that despiseth the gain of oppressions,

That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes,

your breath...] Better as R.V. **your breath** (i.e. "anger") is a **fire** that devours you.

12. *as the burnings of lime*] i.e. "as if burned to lime." An image probably suggested by Am. ii. 1. The word rendered *cut up* (R.V. *cut down*) only occurs again in Ps. lxxx. 16.

13. The signal deliverance of Jerusalem will be a great demonstration to all the world of the omnipotence of Israel's God. The verse is usually taken, and perhaps rightly, as an introduction to the second half of the poem, which deals mainly with the *consequences* of the great act of judgment.

14—16. Being thus assured of a speedy answer to his prayers, the writer proceeds, in language of great force and beauty, to describe the moral effect on the Jewish people.

14. *The sinners...hypocrites*] Rather: **The sinners are afraid in Zion, trembling hath seized the impious** (see on ch. ix. 17). An ungodly party still exists, in spite of the fact that Zion is filled with judgment and righteousness (*v.* 5). The reason of their terror is expressed in what immediately follows.

Who among us shall dwell...] The questions are not merely rhetorical, introducing the description of the righteous man, as in Ps. xv. 1, xxiv. 3; but an exclamation put into the mouths of the sinners. They realise at last what Jehovah is, and begin to wonder how they can live with Him who is a consuming fire. The word "dwell" means strictly "sojourn as a protected guest," and is the same as that used in Ps. xv. 1.

everlasting burnings] There is of course no allusion here to eternal punishment. The "fire" is Jehovah's holiness, manifested in the destruction of His enemies; and this is called eternal because the Divine wrath against sin is inexhaustible.

15, 16. A triumphant answer to the fearful self-questionings of the ungodly. The passage closely resembles Ps. xv. 2 ff., xxiv. 4 f. First the character of the true citizen of God's Kingdom is expressed in general terms, and then the details are given in which the character is revealed.

That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,
And shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;
He shall dwell on high :

His place of defence *shall be* the munitions of rocks :
Bread *shall be* given him ; his waters *shall be* sure.

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty :
They shall behold the land that is very far off.

Thine heart shall meditate terror.

Where *is* the scribe? where *is* the receiver?

Where *is* he that counted the towers?

that shaketh his hands] The metaphor is a very suggestive one, the verb being the same as that used in v. 9 of the trees shaking off their leaves. All these phrases, indeed, denote the keenest abhorrence of evil.

16. *he shall dwell on high*] (lit. "inhabit heights"), i.e. in absolute security, as is said of Jehovah Himself in v. 5. *the munitions of rocks*] inexpugnable rock-fortresses.

bread shall be given...] The image of a siege is still kept up: the righteous inhabits a fortress that shall never be starved into surrender.

17—24. The idea of the perfect security of the righteous man leads by an easy transition to more positive features of the golden age.

17. *the (or a) king in his beauty*] The reluctance of many expositors to interpret this phrase of the Messiah is incomprehensible. Delitzsch says that "the king of v. 17 is no more the Messiah than the Messiah in Mic. v. 1 [E.V. v. 2] is the same person as the king who is smitten on the cheek in iv. 14 [E.V. v. 1]." But in Micah the humiliated king is *replaced* by the Messiah, and surely the same conception would be in place here. That the king is Jehovah (Vitranga) is no doubt a possible alternative in view of v. 22, but since whatever be the date of the passage the Messianic hope must have been a living idea of Jewish religion, there seems no reason for trying to evade what seems the most natural explanation. On the "beauty" of the king see Ps. xlv. 2.

the land that is very far off] Rather as R.V., *a far stretching land* (lit. "a land of distances"), the spacious and ever-extending dominions of the Messiah. Few verses of the O.T. have been more misapplied than this.

18, 19. In those days it will require an effort of imagination to recall the dangers of the present, from which the nation shall have been so suddenly and so marvellously saved.

18. *shall meditate terror*] Or, better, *shall muse on the terror* (R.V.),—strive to realise its various circumstances which have so completely disappeared.

Where is the scribe?...receiver] Render with R.V. *where is he that counted, where is he that weighed*; the officers who exacted the tribute.

that counted the towers] calculating the strength of the city with a view to attack it.

- 19 Thou shalt not see a fierce people,
A people of a deeper speech than *thou* canst perceive;
Of a stammering tongue, *that thou canst* not under-
stand.
- 20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities:
Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation,
A tabernacle *that* shall not be taken down;
Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed,
Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.
- 21 But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us
A place of broad rivers *and* streams;
Wherein shall go no galley with oars,
Neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.
- 22 For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver,
The LORD *is* our king; he will save us.
- 23 Thy tacklings are loosed;

19. *Thou shalt not see the fierce people*] Some render "people of barbarous speech"; cf. ch. xxviii. 11.
of a deeper speech, &c.] (Ez. iii. 5), *of too deep speech to be understood.*

that thou canst not understand] Or, without sense.

20, 21. The permanent peace and inviolability of Jerusalem, the centre of the true religion: see ch. xxxii. 18.

20. For *solemnities*, render *festal assembly*.
a tabernacle that shall not be taken down] Better (as R.V.), *a tent that shall not be removed*. For the figure, cf. Jer. x. 20.

21. Here Jerusalem is represented like the great cities of the Nile and Euphrates (cf. Nah. iii. 8), as surrounded by an expanse of waters, protecting it from the approach of an enemy. The idea of course is purely poetical.

the glorious LORD] Strictly, *a glorious One, Jehovah*. For *a place of read instead of*, as Hos. i. 10 (where see R.V.).

galley with oars] probably should be *flotilla of boats*. The meaning appears to be that the city shall not be approached by any description of vessels of war. "Pass thereby" may be rendered "pass over it."

22. In the New Jerusalem Jehovah is Judge, Lawgiver and King, and therefore also its Deliverer from every danger.

23. The abrupt transition from the glorious future to the present or the past, in the first part of the verse, is somewhat surprising at this point. It is not Assyria but Zion which is compared to an unseaworthy ship, a comparison natural enough in itself, as when we speak of the "ship of state."

Thy tacklings are loosed] Or, *thy ropes hung slack*.

They could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail:

Then is the prey of a great spoil divided;

The lame take the prey.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick:

The people that dwell therein *shall be forgiven their iniquity.* 24

they could not well strengthen, &c.] they could not hold fast the foot of their mast, they did not spread out the sail (or, "the ensign").

The subject here is the ropes; they could not serve the two purposes for which they were intended, supporting the mast and extending the sail. The word rendered *well* must from its position be a substantive; it denotes the *μεσόδμη*, the cross-beam into which the mast was let, or else the hole in the keel which received its foot (*ιστοπέδη*). The rendering "sail" is doubtful. The word means elsewhere "ensign," and one is tempted to translate it "flag." But it is said that ships had no flags in ancient times (Cornill on Ez. xxvii. 7).

the prey of a great spoil] Rather, "prey of spoil in abundance." The expression "prey of spoil" is perhaps to be explained like the Latin *praeda exuviarum*. The figure of the ship is entirely dropped. On the word for "prey" see on ch. ix. 6.

24. The healing of disease and the forgiveness of sin are combined as in Ps. ciii. 3; Matt. ix. 2 ff., &c. To the Old Testament saints sickness was the proof of God's displeasure and of sin unforgiven. Hence in the conception of the Messianic community, the abolition of sickness, the chief evil of life, is the indispensable pledge that guilt is taken away. Cf. Ex. xxiii. 25.

CH. XXXIV., XXXV. A PROPHECY OF VENGEANCE ON EDM, AND THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF ISRAEL.

The oracle consists of two sharply contrasted eschatological pictures, one of judgment, the other of redemption.

i. The first (ch. xxxiv.) commences with a lurid description of the terrors of the last judgment, which is a universal judgment on the nations of the world (*vv.* 1—4). But this passes abruptly (*vv.* 5—17) into a threat of special and fearful vengeance on Edom for its implacable hostility to the people of God (*v.* 8). An indiscriminate slaughter of its population is decreed (5—8); and the land shall be turned into a perpetual desolation, haunted by desert beasts and creatures of demon kind (9—17).

ii. Ch. xxxv. is a beautiful prophecy of Israel's restoration, in imagery borrowed chiefly from the second part of the book of Isaiah. The marvellous transformation of nature, the appearing of Jehovah to deliver His people, the cessation of human infirmities, and the raising of a highway for the redeemed of the Lord to return, lead up to the final promise of everlasting joy and gladness to the ransomed nation, and the banishment of sorrow and sighing from their midst.

- 34 Come near, ye nations, to hear ;
 And hearken, ye people :
 Let the earth hear, and all that is therein ;
 The world, and all things that come forth of it.
- 2 For the indignation of the LORD *is* upon all nations,
 And *his* fury upon all their armies :
 He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them
 to the slaughter.
- 3 Their slain also shall be cast out,
 And their stink shall come up *out of* their carcasses,
 And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

The passage is post-Exilic. Although the "perpetual hatred" (Ez. xxxv. 5) of Edom to Judah no doubt dated from the subjugation of the former country by David (2 Sam. viii. 13, 14), so passionate a longing for vengeance as we find here is only intelligible after the crowning exhibition of Edomitish hostility in the day of Jerusalem's calamity (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Ezek. xxv. 12, xxxv. 5, 10 ff.; Obad. 10—16). This conclusion is confirmed by obvious traces of familiarity with writings belonging to the end of the Exile if not later (chs. xiii., xiv., xl. ff., esp. lxiii. 1—6), and by the fact that the dispersion of the Jews is presupposed by ch. xxxv. A more exact determination of its date is impossible. The mutual antipathy of Judah and Edom continued unabated for centuries after the Exile, and was constantly inflamed by fresh encroachments on Judæan territory on the part of the Edomites, who in this period were being dispossessed of their ancestral possessions by the growing power of the Nabatæans. Some such incident may have been the occasion of the threat in Mal. i. 2—5 (c. 450 B.C.), and a succession of them would keep alive the embittered feeling which is unmistakably present in this prophecy.

1—4. The announcement of the world-judgment, introduced by a proclamation addressed to all nations. The peoples are invited to *come near*, as if for debate (ch. xli. 1, xlviii. 16, lvii. 3), but really to hear their doom. Cf. ch. i. 2; Deut. xxxii. 1; Mic. i. 2.

all that is therein] Better, *the fulness thereof* (R.V.);—the same word as in ch. vi. 3.

all things that come forth of it] The word is used (1) of vegetation, the produce of the earth, (2) of a man's issue: here, apparently, by a mixture of metaphors, of mankind as springing from the earth.

2. *For the indignation of the LORD...*] Rather, **For Jehovah hath indignation...and fury**. It is remarkable that no reason is assigned for Jehovah's anger.

their armies] *their host* (R.V.). *he hath utterly destroyed them*] Lit. *he hath made them a devoted thing*,—*ḥērem*, a technical word for that which is irrevocably devoted to the deity, usually implying utter destruction. Cf. ch. xi. 15.

3. Cf. Joel ii. 20; Am. iv. 10.

And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
 And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scrole :
 And all their host shall fall down,
 As the leaf falleth off from the vine,
 And as a fallen *fig* from the fig tree.
 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven :
 Behold, it shall come down upon Idumea,
 And upon the people of my curse, to judgment.
 The sword of the LORD is filled *with* blood,
 It is made fat with fatness,
 And with the blood of lambs and goats,
 With the fat of the kidneys of rams :
 For the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah,
 And a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.
 And the unicorns shall come down with them,

4. The representation seems somewhat confused. Bickell acutely observes that "the host of heaven" is probably a marginal gloss to "their host" later in the verse, and that the original subject of the first clause ("the hills") has been displaced by it. The first line then supplies the parallel to the last line of v. 3:—

"And the mountains shall melt with their blood
 (4.) And all [the hills] shall be dissolved."

and the heavens...as a scrole] Cf. ch. li. 6; Ps. cii. 26; Matt. xxiv. 29; Rev. vi. 13, 14.

fall down...falleth off from...fallen fig] R.V. fade away...fadeth from off...fading leaf.

5—8. The slaughter of the inhabitants of Edom.

5. *my sword* (see on ch. xxvii. 1) *shall be bathed*] Better: **is drunk**; i.e. not "with blood" (which suggests an idea foreign to this passage) but "with fury," in preparation for its work, which is on earth.

Idumea] Read **Edom** with R.V. The A.V. uses this Greek form here and in v. 6, and in Ezek. xxxv. 15, xxxvi. 5, without any justification.

the people of my curse] The last word is strictly **ban** (*hērem*, cf. v. 2): "the people on whom I have laid the ban."

6. *The sword of the LORD is filled*] Render: **A sword hath Jehovah which is filled**, &c.

made fat with fatness] Or, "greased with fat" (different words in the original). The Edomites are compared to sacrificial animals; cf. Zeph. i. 7; Jer. xlvi. 10, li. 40; Ezek. xxxix. 17 ff. (See also 2 Sam. i. 22.)

Bozrah (ch. lxiii. 1; Gen. xxxvi. 33; Am. i. 12; Jer. xlix. 13, 22) was a chief city of Edom, certainly not a place of that name in the Hauran; more probably *El-Buṣeira*, south of the Dead Sea; but Wetzstein identifies it with Petra.

7. For *unicorns* render with R.V. **wild oxen**.

- And the bullocks with the bulls ;
 And their land shall be soaked with blood,
 And their dust made fat with fatness.
 8 For *it is* the day of the LORD's vengeance,
And the year of recompences for the controversy of
 Zion.
 9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch,
 And the dust thereof into brimstone,
 And the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
 10 It shall not be quenched night nor day ;
 The smoke thereof shall go up for ever :
 From generation to generation it shall lie waste ;
 None shall pass through it for ever and ever.
 11 But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it ;
 The owl also and the raven shall dwell in it :
 And he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion,
 and the stones of emptiness.

come down] sc. to the place of slaughter, Jer. xlviii. 15, &c.

8. Comp. ch. lxi. 2, lxiii. 4; Jer. l. 28, li. 6, 11.

the controversy of Zion] with Edom.

9—17. The fate of the land of Edom is next represented under two incompatible images,—first that of a perpetual conflagration (vv. 9, 10), and second that of a dreary solitude, peopled only by “doleful creatures” (vv. 11 ff.).

9, 10. The description is no doubt suggested by the volcanic phenomena which accompanied the destruction of the neighbouring cities of the Plain (Gen. xix.; Jer. xlix. 18). The division of clauses in the LXX. is much preferable to that in the Hebrew Text. Render accordingly: *...and its land shall become pitch, burning night and day; it shall not be quenched for ever; its smoke shall go up from generation to generation; it shall lie waste to all eternity, none passing through it* (so Cheyne). The last two clauses prepare for the transition to the other picture of ruin, which is elaborated in the verses that follow.

11. *the cormorant and the bittern*] Zeph. ii. 14. R.V. has “the pelican (Lev. xi. 18; Ps. cii. 6) and the porcupine”; for the latter see on ch. xiv. 23.

the line of confusion, and the stones (R.V. **plummet**) *of emptiness*] See on ch. xxviii. 17. These implements of the builder were naturally employed where a partial destruction (of houses, &c.) was contemplated; but the image is also extended to the case of complete demolition; 2 Ki. xxi. 13; Lam. ii. 8. “Confusion” and “emptiness” stand for the words *tôhû* and *bôhû*, used of the primeval chaos in Gen. i. 2 (cf. Jer. iv. 23).

They shall call the nobles thereof *to* the kingdom, but ¹²
none *shall be* there,

And all her princes shall be nothing.

And thorns shall come up *in* her palaces, ¹³

Nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof:

And it shall be a habitation of dragons,

And a court for owls.

The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the ¹⁴
wild beasts of the island,

And the satyr shall cry to his fellow;

The shrich owl also shall rest there,

And find for herself a place of rest.

There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, ¹⁵

And hatch, and gather under her shadow:

There shall the vultures also be gathered,

Every one *with* her mate.

12. *They shall call the nobles...there*] A very obscure sentence, probably through a defect in the text. The rendering of E.V. might be maintained if with Prof. Weir we suppose a transposition of words in the original; the inference being that the monarchy in Edom was elective (cf. Gen. xxxvi. 31 ff.). More likely, however, "her nobles" is the subject of a sentence the rest of which is now lost; and the following words are to be translated "and there is no kingdom there which they may proclaim."

13. The mention of nobles and princes naturally leads to the palaces and castles.

dragons...owls] jackals...ostriches (R.V.). See on ch. xiii. 21 f.

14. *wild beasts of the desert...wild beasts of the island...satyr*] See on ch. xiii. 21 f.

the shrich owl] The Hebr. is *Lilith*, a fem. formation from *lail* "night." Render with Cheyne: **the night-hag**. Lilith appears to be a creation of the Babylonian demonology. "This Lilith plays a great part in the Talmudic demonology; the cabalistic Rabbis forged a whole legend in which this spirit is said to have taken a feminine form to deceive Adam, and to have united herself to him." (Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Engl. Tr. p. 38.) She is mentioned in the Bible only here.

find for herself a place of rest] On the restlessness of evil spirits, cf. Matt. xii. 43, "walketh through dry places, seeking rest."

15. *the great owl*] **the arrowsnake** as in R.V.

gather under her shadow] The expression is almost meaningless, when applied to a very small snake. Duhm, by a clever emendation, reads "shall lay and hatch and heap up her eggs" (*bēḡehā* for *bēḡillāh*).

16. The verse is remarkable in several respects. It seems to be a solemn assurance that the foregoing prediction shall be fulfilled

- 16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read :
 No one of these shall fail,
 None shall want her mate :
 For my mouth it hath commanded,
 And his spirit it hath gathered them.
- 17 And he hath cast the lot for them,
 And his hand hath divided it unto them by line :
 They shall possess it for ever,
 From generation to generation shall they dwell therein.
- 35 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad *for*
 them ;
 And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

literally and down to the smallest details; and must therefore be addressed to a future generation of readers. This implies a view of the scope and functions of prophecy, which is not that of the older prophets. Further, the expression "book of Jehovah" appears to point to the existence of a prophetic canon; and the opening exhortation presupposes a habit of searching for evidences of the fulfilment of prophecy. All these circumstances would indicate a late date for the composition of this oracle. Some commentators, however, have sought to evade this interpretation by amending the text with the help of the LXX.; reading: "According to their number Jehovah calls them, &c." But the received text excites no suspicion.

the book of the LORD] The immediate reference must be to the present prophecy, since there is no other which speaks of the desert creatures that are to possess the land of Edom. But the phrase is too pregnant to be used of a detached oracle; we must therefore conclude that it was destined to be incorporated in a collection of sacred writings.

my mouth...his spirit] The change of person is harsh. Read either "his mouth" or (better) "the mouth of Jehovah" (LXX. has "Jehovah" alone).

17. The eternity of the judgment is again emphasised (*v.* 10).

Ch. xxxv. is full of reminiscences of earlier prophecies, chiefly from ch. xl. ff. Although there is no external mark of transition, there is no reason to doubt that it is the continuation of ch. xxxiv., and that the brilliant contrast is designed.

1, 2. Joy in the desert, now transformed into a fertile and luxuriant plain. Cf. ch. xli. 18 f.

1. *solitary place*] *parched land* (R.V. marg.).

The words *for them* should be omitted; what looks like a pronominal suffix in the Hebr. being produced by an assimilation of the verbal ending to the following consonant (so already Aben Ezra).

the rose is probably the autumn crocus (R.V. marg.). Cant. ii. 1 shews that a meadow-flower of striking beauty is meant. Many commentators

It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice
Even *with* joy and singing:
The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it,
The excellency of Carmel and Sharon,
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
And the excellency of our God.

Strengthen ye the weak hands,
And confirm the feeble knees.
Say to them that are of a fearful heart,
Be strong, fear not:
Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance,
Even God *with* a recompence;
He will come and save you.
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then shall the lame *man* leap as a hart,
And the tongue of the dumb sing:
For in the wilderness shall waters break out,
And streams in the desert.
And the parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water:

prefer the narcissus, a spring flower exceptionally plentiful in the plain of Sharon. (Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, pp. 476 f.)

2. *the glory of Lebanon...Carmel and Sharon*] Cf. ch. xxxiii. 9, xxix. 17 (xxxii. 15).

they (lit. *these*) *shall see the glory of the LORD*] ch. xl. 5.

3, 4. An exhortation to the despondent. For the figures of *v.* 3 see Job iv. 3, 4.

4. Cf. xl. 9, 10. *them that are of a fearful heart*] Lit. "the hasty of heart." The phrase occurs with a different sense in ch. xxxii. 4. *behold, your God...recompence*] Better (as R.V. marg.): **behold your God! vengeance cometh, the recompence of God; He Himself, &c.**

5, 6 a. The removal of bodily infirmities. How far the language is to be taken figuratively it may be difficult to say. Comp. ch. xxix. 18, xxxii. 3, 4.

6 b, 7. The transformation of the desert. Cf. ch. xliii. 19, 20, xlviii. 21, xlix. 10.

7. *the parched ground*] The Hebr. word (*shārāb*, only again in xlix. 10) is generally thought to be identical with *Serāb*, the Arabic name for the mirage (so R.V. marg.). Allusions to this remarkable optical phenomenon, by which even experienced travellers are often

- In the habitation of dragons, where each lay,
Shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
- 8 And a highway shall be there, and a way,
 And it shall be called The way of holiness;
 The unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for
 those:
- The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.
- 9 No lion shall be there,
 Nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon,
 It shall not be found there;
 But the redeemed shall walk *there*:

deceived, are, as might be expected, common in Arabic literature.
 Cf. *Koran* (*Sura* xxiv. 39):—

“The works of the unbelievers are like the mirage in the
 desert;

The thirsty takes it for water, till he comes up to it and finds
 that it is nothing.”

(Quoted by Gesenius.) The idea in the text, therefore, would be that
 the illusion which mocks the thirsty caravan shall become a reality;
 water shall be as common in the desert as the mirage now is. The
 rendering “parched ground,” however, corresponds with Jewish usage
 and the ancient versions; and the sense “mirage” is unsuitable in
 ch. xlix. 10.

in the habitation...rushes] A literal rendering of the Hebr. would
 be: “in the habitation of jackals, its lair, a court (the word rendered
 ‘habitation’ in E.V. of ch. xxxiv. 13) for reeds and rushes.” This yields
 no sense. The text appears to have suffered extensive mutilation.

8—10. The highway in the desert. The image is founded on ch. xl. 3,
 xliii. 19, xlix. 11 (xi. 16).

8. The words *and a way* are superfluous, and may have originated
 through dittography.

but it shall be for those] Better (with an emendation of the text):
but it shall be for his people. It is probable also that the next words
 should be joined to this clause,—“it shall be for His people when it
 walks in the way,” i.e. goes on pilgrimage. The verse as a whole
 suggests that the way is for the permanent use of pilgrims (cf. ch. xix.
 23), not for the temporary purpose of the Return from Babylon (as in
 ch. xliii. 19, &c.). Another proposed rendering is “and He Himself
 (Jehovah) walks in the way for them” (cf. ch. lii. 12). But this is less
 natural.

fools shall not err therein] If this clause be (as suggested) independent
 of the preceding, the meaning possibly is that fools shall not be there at
 all. The Hebr. word for “fool” (*‘evil*) connotes moral perversity, not
 merely the simplicity of inexperience (Job v. 3; Prov. i. 7).

9. *the redeemed*] cf. ch. li. 10, lxii. 12, lxiii. 4.

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
 And come to Zion with songs
 And everlasting joy upon their heads:
 They shall obtain joy and gladness,
 And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

10. The verse is found verbatim in ch. li. 11. Cf. also li. 3, lxi. 7.

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads] See ch. lxi. 3—"a garland for ashes" (R.V.).

CHAPTERS XXXVI.—XXXIX.

These chapters form the conclusion of the first part of the book of Isaiah. They contain narratives of three important historical events, each of which illustrates the commanding influence exercised by the prophet in the reign of Hezekiah. These are:—(1) the unsuccessful efforts of Sennacherib to obtain possession of Jerusalem by threats and blandishments (ch. xxxvi., xxxvii.); (2) Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (ch. xxxviii.); and (3) the embassy of Merodach-Baladan to Hezekiah (ch. xxxix.). At a time when the books of Scripture circulated separately it was important that readers of the book of Isaiah should have before them all the information about the career of the great prophet that could be collected from authentic sources; and there is no reasonable doubt that these chapters are an excerpt from the canonical books of Kings (2 Kings xviii. 13—xx. 19). The view of Vitringa and others that Isaiah himself is the author, and that the passage was transferred from his pages to those of the historian, is not borne out by a comparison of the two texts. Not only is the text in Kings on the whole superior to that in Isaiah, but the narrative before us reveals its secondary character by a tendency towards abridgement and simplification; and in other respects shews "manifest traces of having passed through the hands of the compiler of Kings" (Driver, *Introd.*, p. 215). Moreover, it is extremely unlikely that the death of Sennacherib (B.C. 681) recorded in xxxvii. 38 happened within the lifetime of Isaiah. That the editor of the books of Kings drew in his turn upon an older document is probable; but there is no reason to suppose that the Isaianic editor used this work as an independent authority.

The only important differences between the two narratives are: (a) the omission in Isaiah of the account of Hezekiah's submission (2 Ki. xviii. 14—16); and (b) the addition of Hezekiah's Psalm of Thanksgiving on his recovery (ch. xxxviii. 9—20). The omission (a) can be explained by the author's desire to pass over an incident which was not of immediate interest for the biography of Isaiah. (Other critical and historical questions raised by these verses do not concern us here; but see General Introduction, pp. xix ff.) The Song of Hezekiah must have been added from a separate source.

36 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against

CH. XXXVI., XXXVII. HEZEKIAH, ENCOURAGED BY ISAIAH,
RESISTS SENNACHERIB'S SUMMONS TO SURRENDER.

We have here to all appearance the record of two successive attempts of the Assyrian king to extort the surrender of Jerusalem; in the first instance by a display of armed force (xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 8), and then by a threatening letter to Hezekiah (xxxvii. 9—38). There is certainly some improbability in the view thus presented of Sennacherib's conduct. The advance of Tirhakah no doubt rendered the possession of Jerusalem more than ever indispensable to his safety, and a second summons to Hezekiah after the first had failed is in these circumstances perfectly intelligible. But it is less easy to suppose that he could have expected Hezekiah, with Ethiopian succour at hand, and after having defied a detachment of the Assyrian army, to yield to a mere letter, and one that simply repeats the former arguments with no additional inducement to surrender. There is besides a close parallelism between the two incidents which suggests the possibility that the chapters may contain two versions of the same occurrence instead of a single narrative of two successive events. If this view be correct the first narrative breaks off in the middle of xxxvii. 9 with the words "and when he heard it," and is resumed and concluded in *vv.* 37, 38. The duplicate version is given in the intermediate section (*vv.* 9 b—36). The assumption may not be quite necessary, but it has commended itself even to cautious critics like Dillmann and Kittel, and deserves consideration. Nor does it seriously affect the historic credibility of the record. The discrepancies are perhaps not greater than between parallel accounts in the four Gospels.

1. (Cf. 2 Ki. xviii. 13.) *in the fourteenth year*] The year of Sennacherib's expedition was beyond question 701 B.C. If this was really the fourteenth year of Hezekiah his accession must have taken place in 715. On the objections to this date, see Chronological Note, pp. lxxvi f. Assuming that the arguments there given are valid, the error in this verse might be accounted for in either of two ways. (1) It has been suggested that ch. xxxviii. f. stood originally before ch. xxxvi. f., and that in the process of transposition the precise specification of time, which really belonged to ch. xxxviii., was retained as the introduction to the whole group of narratives. The 14th year of Hezekiah would thus be the true date, not necessarily of Sennacherib's invasion, but of Hezekiah's sickness and the embassy of Merodach-Baladan. (2) A second supposition is that the date was inserted here by an editor, who arrived at it by a calculation based on ch. xxxviii. 5. Deducting the 15 years' lease of life assured to Hezekiah by the prophet from the 29 years of his reign, he rightly concluded that his sickness must have occurred in the 14th year of his reign, and supposing further that all these events were nearly contemporaneous, he substituted this exact date for some vaguer statement which he may have found in his original. A third hypothesis,—that the date is correct, but that the

all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiab's son, ³ which *was* over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. And Rabshakeh said unto ⁴ them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest? I say, *sayest thou*, (*but they are but vain words*) *I* ⁵ *have* counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in ⁶

name Sennacherib has been wrongly written for Sargon,—falls to the ground with the whole theory of an invasion of Judah by the latter monarch.

all the defenced cities of Judah] Sennacherib himself boasts that he captured forty-six of them in this campaign.

2. *Rabshakeh* is not a proper name, but an official designation, like the Tartan (see ch. xx. 1) and the Rab-saris (chief eunuch) who are mentioned along with him in 2 Ki. xviii. 17. The Assyrian word is *Rab-saq*, said to mean "chief of the officers."

from Lachish] The most important Judæan fortress in the Shephelah, commanding the road from Egypt. Recent excavations by Mr Flinders Petrie have identified its site with Tell-el-Hesi, a few miles distant from the modern Umm Lakis.

the conduit of the upper pool...] See on ch. vii. 3.

3. The words "and they called the king" in 2 Ki. xviii. 18 are omitted. *which was over the house*] See ch. xxii. 15. It will be seen that in accordance with ch. xxii. 20, Eliakim here occupies the office formerly held by Shebna, although the latter still appears in a subordinate capacity as *scribe* or rather *secretary* (R.V. marg.).

the recorder] Lit. **the remembrancer**.

4—10. The speech of the Rabshakeh, dealing with the two motives which might be supposed to have induced Hezekiah to rebel: (1) his reliance on the help of Egypt (v. 6), and (2) his religious confidence in Jehovah (v. 7); and urging him to submit to the king of Assyria (vv. 8—10).

5. *I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) &c.*] Rather (as Cheyne and others) **Thinkest thou that a mere word of the lips is counsel and strength for war?** "You cannot think so," reasons the Rabshakeh, "you must have some ground of confidence; what is it?" The rendering of A.V. which takes the phrase "merely a word of the lips" as a parenthetic ejaculation is intelligible, but hardly right. In any case the text must be corrected in accordance with that of 2 Kings xviii. 20 ("thou sayest [thinkest]" for "I say [think]").

the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is it* not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language;

6. *the staff of this broken reed*] For the idea, cf. ch. xxx. 1—5; for the figure, Ezek. xxix. 6, 7.

7. Not only is Hezekiah destitute of earthly help, but he has forfeited the protection of his own deity, by what from the heathen point of view seemed an act of sacrilege, the abolition of the local sanctuaries (see 2 Ki. xviii. 4).

8. *give pledges...to*] Better (as R.V. marg.): **make a wager with**. The taunt must have been peculiarly galling to the war-party in Judah, who were painfully conscious of their weakness in cavalry; ch. xxx. 16, xxxi. 1, 3, and v. 9 of this chapter.

9. Hezekiah's power is not equal to that of the lowest official in the Assyrian Empire; yet he dares to defy the great king! The word rendered *captain* means the governor of a province.

10. That the Assyrian should represent himself as commissioned by Jehovah to avenge the desecration of his sanctuaries is not by any means incredible. A precisely similar sentiment is put into the mouth of Cyrus in his account of the conquest of Babylon. It expresses no serious religious conviction (see v. 20); and the resemblance to Isaiah's teaching (ch. x. 5 ff.) is either accidental, or is due to a Jewish colouring unconsciously imparted to the narrative by the writer.

For *this land*, in the first half of the verse, we read in 2 Ki. xviii. 25 "this place," i.e. Jerusalem.

11, 12. The Judæan ministers, fearing the effect of these threats on the people, implore the Rabshakeh to speak to them in Aramaic; but the astute diplomatist immediately perceives his advantage, and sets himself to stir up disaffection amongst the populace.

11. *the Syrian* (or **Aramean** R.V. marg.) *language*] was the medium of international communication in Western Asia, more especially of

for we understand *it*: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master ¹² and to thee to speak these words? *hath he not sent me* to the men that sit upon the wall, that *they* may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? Then ¹³ Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let ¹⁴ not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in ¹⁵ the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king ¹⁶ of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me *by* a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one *of* his vine, and every one *of* his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land ¹⁷ like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of

commerce. Assyrian on the other hand was a barbarous tongue to the Hebrews (ch. xxviii. 11, xxxiii. 19).

the Jews' language] Hebrew is so called only in one other (post-Exilic) passage, Neh. xiii. 24.

12. *that they may eat...*] Note the contrast in v. 16. The clause, therefore, expresses not the desire or purpose of the king of Assyria, but the effect of submitting to Hezekiah's insane policy.

13—20. The Rabshakeh's appeal to the people.

13. *the great king*] It is to be observed that the speaker consistently withholds the title of king from Hezekiah.

15. *The LORD will surely deliver us*] Cf. ch. xxxvii. 35.

16. *Make an agreement with me by a present*] R.V. **Make peace with me**. Lit. "Make to me a blessing" (see R.V. marg.). The expression does not occur elsewhere, and its exact sense is doubtful. Probably "make peaceful submission to me."

come out to me] The ordinary phrase for the surrender of a city (1 Sam. xi. 3; Jer. xxi. 9, &c.). *and eat*] **that ye may eat**. If they will but yield now, they may at once resume the cultivation of their fields and orchards.

17. But only for a time! The Rabshakeh does not conceal from them that their ultimate fate will be deportation; although he tries to present it in an attractive light. The parallel verse in 2 Kings (xviii. 32) contains these additional words "a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die; and hearken not unto Hezekiah."

- 18 bread and vineyards. *Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of
- 19 Assyria? Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered
- 20 Samaria out of my hand? Who *are they* amongst all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of
- 21 my hand? But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying,
- 22 Answer him not. Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.
- 37 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and
- 2 went *into* the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah

18—20. The long record of Assyrian conquest shews the folly of Hezekiah's trust in Divine power. Cf. ch. x. 9—11.

persuade] Rather, *beguile*.

19. On *Hamath and Arphad*, see ch. x. 9. *Sepharvaim* has usually been identified with Sippar to the north of Babylon. Since, however, it is always mentioned along with Hamath and Arpad, it is more probable that a city in northern Syria is meant. Some consider it to be the same as Sibraim in Ezek. xlvii. 16 (between Damascus and Hamath).

2 Ki. xviii. 34 adds *Hena and Ivvah* as in ch. xxxvii. 13.

and have they delivered] Others translate "how much less have they (the gods of Samaria) delivered." The Hebrew is peculiar.

21. *they held their peace*] i.e. the people on the wall, as is expressed in 2 Ki. xviii. 36.

xxxvii. 1—4. Hezekiah, thrown back at last on the policy of faith consistently advocated by Isaiah, sends an influential deputation to the prophet, entreating him to intercede for the nation in this extremity. (Cf. 2 Ki. xxii. 12—14; Jer. xxxvii. 3.) The king's message could not fail to be interpreted as a public confession of the utter failure of the policy which had landed him in such a desperate situation.

1. *went into the house of the LORD*] See vv. 14, 15. Cf. 1 Ki. viii. 33, 34.

2. The embassy consists of the two chief ministers, and the "elders of the priests." The appearance of Shebna on such an errand was a striking evidence of the completeness of Isaiah's moral victory (ch. xxii. 15 ff.).

the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, ³ Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. It may be ⁴ the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that is left. So the servants of king Hezekiah ⁵ came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye ⁶ say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will ⁷ send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and

3. *a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy*] Rather, of distress and chastisement and rejection. The word for "blasphemy" (Neh. ix. 18, 26; Ezek. xxxv. 12) is differently pointed from that here used, which occurs only here and in 2 Ki. xix. 3. The sense "rejection" suits the context better; the king speaks of the "distress" as a Divine dispensation.

the children are come to the birth...] Obviously a proverbial expression for a crisis which becomes dangerous through lack of strength to meet it (cf. ch. lxi. 9; Hos. xiii. 13).

4. *It may be*] Or "Peradventure." The one hope is that Jehovah will take notice of the dishonour done to His name by the threats and blasphemies of the Assyrian king. *the LORD thy God*] See ch. vii. 13. The prophet stands nearer to God than other men. Jehovah is *the living God*, as opposed to the dead idols to whose level the boast of the Assyrian had degraded Him. (Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36.)

wherefore lift up] Or perhaps "and that thou wilt lift up,"—still dependent on "It may be." The efficacy of intercessory prayer is taught and assumed throughout the Old Testament: see Gen. xviii. 23 ff.; Ex. xxxii. 31 ff.; 1 Sam. xii. 19; Am. vii. 2, 5; Jer. xiv. 11, xv. 1, &c.

the remnant that is left] Cf. v. 32. The idea is Isaiah's; but the word is not that used elsewhere by the prophet himself.

5. The verse is really subordinate to v. 6,—“And when the servants ...came...Isaiah said,” &c.

6, 7. Isaiah's answer far exceeds the king's request. He does not need now to pray, for he is already in possession of the Divine message for this crisis.

6. *the servants*] Lit. "the youths." Cf. 1 Kings xx. 14.

7. *I will send a blast upon him*] Render as in R.V. I will put a spirit in him, i.e. a spirit of craven fear, depriving him of his natural courage and resourcefulness. How the spirit will work is stated in what follows: a mere rumour will drive him back to his own land, there to

return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

- 8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed
 9 from Lachish. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,
 10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of
 11 Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt
 12 thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in
 13 Telassar? Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of

meet his death (cf. 2 Ki. vii. 6). There is no allusion in this oracle to the disastrous blow recorded in v. 36. The "rumour" is no doubt that of the approach of Tirhakah (v. 9).

8. *Libnah*] another of the "defenced cities" of Judah (Josh. x. 29). Its situation is not known.

9. *Tirhakah king of Ethiopia* is named only here in the O.T. See General Introduction, p. xvi.

10—13. Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah. It is in substance a repetition of the chief argument of the Rabshakeh, with the unimportant modification that Hezekiah is here regarded as deceived by his God, while the Rabshakeh chose to represent him as a deceiver of his people.

11. *by destroying them utterly*] Lit. **putting them to the ban**, see on ch. xxxiv. 2.

12. *my fathers* here means "my predecessors"; for the dynasty to which Sennacherib belonged had been founded by his father Sargon. The place-names in this verse are all found on the Assyrian monuments. (See Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, on 2 Ki. xix. 12.) *Gozan* (Assyr. *Guzana*) is one of the places to which the Northern Israelites were exiled (2 Ki. xvii. 6, xviii. 11); it lay on the river Chaboras, a northern affluent of the Euphrates. *Haran* is the well-known commercial emporium of northern Mesopotamia, on another tributary (the Belikh) west of the Chaboras. *Rezeph* (Assyr. *Rasappa*) is about 20 miles south of the Euphrates on the route from Haran to Palmyra. *Telassar* is in Assyrian *Til-Assuri* ("Hill of Asshur"), a name likely to be of frequent occurrence. The place here can hardly be the Babylonian Til-Assuri mentioned in the monuments; it may rather have been one of the cities of *Eden*, i.e. the small kingdom called *Bit-Adini* on the Upper Euphrates.

13. *Hamath...Arphad...Sepharvaim*] See ch. xxxvi. 19. *Hena*

Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the ¹⁴ messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up *unto* the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And ¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, O LORD of hosts, ¹⁶ God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O ¹⁷ LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of ¹⁸

and Ivah (R.V. more correctly, *Ivvah*) are not known. The latter is probably the same as *Ava* or *Avva* (2 Ki. xvii. 24).

14—20. Hezekiah's prayer in the Temple. Cheyne refers to a striking parallel in the Egyptian version of Sennacherib's overthrow. "On this the monarch (Sethos), greatly distressed, entered into the inner sanctuary, and before the image of the god (Ptah) bewailed the fate which impended over him. As he wept he fell asleep, and dreamed that the god came and stood by his side, bidding him be of good cheer, and go boldly forth to meet the Arabian (Assyrian) host, which would do him no hurt, as he himself would send those who should help him" (Herod. II. 141, Rawlinson).

14. *spread it* (the letter) *before the LORD*] that Jehovah might take notice of the arrogance displayed by it. The act is symbolic. Similarly the Jews at the beginning of the Maccabean insurrection spread out in prayer a copy of the Law, defaced with idolatrous pictures, as a witness to the outrages perpetrated against their religion (1 Macc. iii. 48).

16. The prayer opens with a solemn invocation of Jehovah, first as God of Israel, and second as the only true God and Creator of all things.

that dwellest between (or, *art enthroned upon*) *the cherubims*] Cf. 1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; Ps. lxxx. 1. The Cherubim may have been originally symbolic representations of the storm-cloud (see Ps. xviii. 10) and hence bearers of the Divine Presence (Ezek. i.); but the reference here is undoubtedly to the two figures over the ark in the Temple; Jehovah, therefore, is addressed as the God of the Temple.

thou art the God...alone] *Thou art (He that is) God alone*. The sole divinity of Jehovah is here presented as a theological consequence of the doctrine of creation, a fundamental idea in the teaching of ch. xl. ff. Although the doctrine of creation was held in Israel from the earliest times, it seems to have been by slow degrees that its full religious significance was apprehended.

17. *open thine eyes...and see*] The Hebr. has "thine eye," which is probably a better reading than "thine eyes" in 2 Ki. xix. 16. So "who hath sent" is more correct than "who hath sent him" (the messenger).

to reproach the living God] as in v. 4.

Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,
 19 and have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no
 gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: there-
 20 fore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD
 our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of
 the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD, *even* thou only.
 21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying,
 Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast
 22 prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: this *is*
 the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him;

18. *all the nations, and their countries*] R.V., following the received text, has "all the countries (lit., lands) and their land." But the true reading is preserved in the corresponding verse of 2 Kings, which A.V. has rightly followed here.

have laid waste] This verb is never used of nations, except in ch. lx.
 12. It differs by a single letter from "laid under the ban" in v. 11, and ought probably to be altered accordingly.

19. *the work of men's hands*] Cf. ch. ii. 20, xvii. 8, xxxi. 7.

wood and stone] Deut. iv. 28, xxviii. 36, 64, xxix. 17; Ez. xx. 32.

20. Therefore let Jehovah shew, in this crisis of religion, that He alone possesses true Godhead.

that thou art the LORD, even thou only] Lit. "that thou art Jehovah alone," cf. Deut. vi. 4. But the easier, and perhaps the original, reading is given by 2 Kings "that thou Jehovah art God alone" (see v. 16).

21—35. The answer to the prayer comes in the form of a message from Isaiah. The message as here given really consists of two distinct oracles: (1) a poem, on the pride and the approaching humiliation of Sennacherib (vv. 22—29); to which is appended a short passage in a different rhythm addressed to Hezekiah (vv. 30—32); (2) a definite prediction, in a less elevated style, of the deliverance of Jerusalem (vv. 33—35). The lyrical passage (vv. 22—32) appears to have been inserted in the narrative from some independent source. Although probably a genuine work of Isaiah, the recitation of a somewhat elaborate poem is hardly a natural form for a prophetic communication to take at so critical a juncture. A terse and pregnant oracle, such as we have in vv. 33—35 suits the situation better, and since these verses contain a complete and direct answer to the prayer of Hezekiah, we need not hesitate to regard them as the actual message of the prophet on this occasion. A slight indication of the original connexion of the narrative may possibly be found in the "therefore" of v. 33, referring back to the "whereas" of v. 21.

21. The construction of the verse is entirely altered in 2 Ki. xix. 20 by the introduction of the words "I have heard." It then reads "That which thou hast prayed...I have heard." But the addition is unnecessary; and the text in Isaiah is to be preferred.

22—29. The poem on Sennacherib is in substance a Taunt-song.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn;

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?

23

And against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice,

And lifted up thine eyes on high?

Even against the Holy One of Israel.

By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and ²⁴ hast said,

By the multitude of my chariots am I come up

To the height of the mountains, *to* the sides of Lebanon;

And I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof:

And I will enter *into* the height of his border, *and* the forest of his Carmel.

but in form an elegy, written in the measure characteristic of the *qînāh*. The first two lines (v. 22) read:

She hath despised thee, hath mocked thee—the virgin daughter of Zion;

Behind thee hath shaken the head—the daughter of Jerusalem.

The prophet anticipates the ignominious retreat of the Assyrian king ("behind thee"), leaving Jerusalem still a "virgin" fortress. To "shake the head" is in the O.T. a gesture of contempt (Ps. xxii. 7; Jer. xviii. 16; Lam. ii. 15, &c.).

23. "What sort of being is He whom thou hast defied?" The first two sentences are rhetorical questions, and require no answer. The last sentence is to be read as an affirmation: **Yea, thou hast lifted up thine eyes to the height against the Holy One of Israel.** To "lift up the voice" means here to speak proudly, not as often to cry aloud (e.g. ch. xiii. 2).

24, 25. The king of Assyria is represented as boasting of the ease with which he triumphs over all natural obstacles in the pursuance of his plans; such language is blasphemy against Jehovah, the Lord of Nature; although the king himself may be hardly conscious of the sin he is committing. The tenses in the speech might all be made perfects by a change of vowels, or they may all be rendered by presents; the king's meaning being simply that he constantly performs such impossibilities as these. The Assyrian parallels cited by Cheyne are very striking (see his *Commentary*, p. 219 and the references there).

24. For *servants* 2 Kings has "messengers," as in vv. 9, 14. *am I come up*] Better, **I go up.** The "I" is emphatic.

the sides of Lebanon means its recesses (R.V. "innermost parts").

the height of his border] Render, **its furthest height**; or (changing

- 25 I have digged, and drunk water ;
And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the
rivers of the besieged *places*.
- 26 Hast thou not heard long ago, *how* I have done it ;
And of ancient times, that I have formed it ?
Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be
to lay waste
Defenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.
- 27 Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power,
They were dismayed and confounded :
They were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green
herb,
As the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted
before it be grown up.

the text in accordance with 2 Ki. xix. 23) *its last retreat* (lit. "lodging-place").

the forest of his Carmel] R.V. *the forest of his fruitful field* (see ch. x. 18, xxix. 17, xxxii. 15 f.)—perhaps the cedar groves on the highest ridges.

25. *I have digged...water*] I (again emphatic) *dig and drink foreign waters*. The word "foreign" is to be supplied from 2 Ki. xix. 24. For the expression cf. Prov. ix. 17, v. 15.

all the rivers of the besieged places] Render with R.V. *all the rivers* (lit. "Nile-streams") *of Egypt*. See on ch. xix. 6. The extravagant hyperbole covers an empty boast; no Assyrian army had ever yet set foot in Egypt, and Sennacherib was not destined to see his dream fulfilled.

26, 27. In all his successes the Assyrian has been but the unconscious instrument of Jehovah's eternal purpose. Cf. ch. x. 5—15.

26. The verse reads, with a slight change of pointing: *Hast thou not heard? Long ago have I made it, from the days of old have I formed it: now I bring it to pass, and so hast thou been (able) to lay waste in ruined heaps defenced cities*. Cf. ch. xxii. 11, xlv. 7, xlv. 11.

27. *Therefore their inhabitants...confounded*] Better, *And their inhabitants (being) of small power* (lit. "short of hand") *were terrified and ashamed*.

grass on the housetops] See Ps. cxxix. 6—8.

corn blasted before it be grown up] The Hebr. text reads "a corn-field before it is in stalk" (see R.V.). The A.V. adopts the reading of 2 Ki. xix. 26, which is perhaps to be preferred—"a blasting before it is in stalk." But neither rendering accounts quite satisfactorily for the words "before it is in stalk." In all probability they are, as Wellhausen has suggested, a corruption of the opening words of the next verse, which is obviously unsymmetrical as it stands.

But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy ²⁸
coming in,

And thy rage against me.

Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come ²⁹
up into mine ears,

Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle
in thy lips,

And I will turn thee back by the way by which thou
camest.

And this *shall be* a sign unto thee,

Ye shall eat *this* year such as groweth of itself;

And the second year that which springeth of the same:

30

28, 29. All the acts of the Assyrian are under the strict surveillance of Jehovah, who will shew His power over him by dragging him back, like a wild beast, to his place. If the emendation of Wellhausen (see on v. 27) be accepted, v. 28 would read: *Before me is thy rising up and thy sitting down* (cf. Ps. cxxxix. 2), and *thy going out and thy coming in I know*, and thy raging against me.

29. For *tumult* render with R.V. marg. *careless ease*. "Raging" and "careless ease" form a contrast, like "rising up" and "sitting down" in the previous verse.

therefore will I put my hook in thy nose] Cf. Ezek. xix. 4, xxix. 4, xxxviii. 4.

I will turn thee back...] See vv. 7 and 34.

30—32. A sign is given to Hezekiah of the fulfilment of the preceding prophecy. But beyond the brief period of hardship which must follow the invasion, the prophet announces the advent of a new age in which all his hopes for the future of Israel shall be realised.

30. The "sign" of this verse is of the same nature as that of Ex. iii. 12, and ch. vii. 14. It consists of a series of events, in themselves natural, which will attest the fact that all the circumstances of the deliverance had been foreordained by Jehovah, and foretold by His prophet.

such as groweth of itself] Hebr. *šāphîah*, the scanty crop produced by the shaken grains of the last harvest (Lev. xxv. 5, 11).

that which springeth of the same] *shāhîš* or in 2 Kings *šāhîsh*, a word which does not occur elsewhere. It is explained to mean "that which springs from the roots" of the corn. The import of the sign at all events is that for two years the regular operations of agriculture will be suspended. It is uncertain how long a period of Assyrian occupation is thus contemplated. The year runs from October to October; and *this year* must apparently mean the year *after* that in which the crops were destroyed by the invader; for in that year there could hardly be even *šāphîah* to eat. We may suppose that the prophecy was spoken in the beginning of the year, i.e. in the autumn of 701, before the usual season of ploughing. The question then arises, How long would the

- And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
 And plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.
- 31 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah
 Shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.
- 32 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
 And they that escape out of mount Zion :
 The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.
- 33 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of
 Assyria,
 He shall not come into this city,
 Nor shoot an arrow there,
 Nor come before it *with* shields,
 Nor cast a bank against it.
- 34 By the way that he came, *by the same* shall he return,
 And shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
- 35 For I will defend this city to save it
 For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Assyrians require to remain in the land in order to destroy the prospects of two successive harvests? Wetzstein states that at the present day, unless the ground has been several times broken up in the previous summer the seed will be lost in the ground. If therefore the Assyrian occupation lasted into the summer of 700, it would interfere with the necessary preparations for a crop in the following year, the year of the *shāhîs*. But even this limited period can hardly be reconciled with the actual result as recorded in v. 36. Probably therefore the sign does not fix the term of the Assyrian occupation, but refers to wider effects of the invasion, the depopulation of the country, the destruction of homesteads, &c., which rendered an immediate resumption of agricultural activity impossible.

31. Comp. ch. xxvii. 6.

32. *the zeal of the LORD...this*] From ch. ix. 7.

33—35. An assurance that Jehovah will protect Jerusalem, in answer to Hezekiah's prayer.

33. *Therefore* probably attaches itself to "whereas" in v. 21 (see the note on that verse).

34. Cf. vv. 7 and 29.

35. *I will defend this city*] Cf. ch. xxxi. 5, where the same verb is used.

for my servant David's sake] An expression of frequent occurrence in the books of Kings. See 1 Ki. xi. 13, 34, xv. 4; 2 Ki. viii. 19.

36. The miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's host. It is certainly remarkable that none of Isaiah's prophecies delivered at the time predict this appalling disaster, the clearest anticipation of it being in ch. xvii. 12—14, an oracle delivered some time before. At the same time some such occurrence is needed to account for Sennacherib's precipitate

Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in ³⁶ the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king ³⁷ of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping ³⁸ *in* the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they

retreat before Tirhakah. A confirmation of the main fact is also found in the Egyptian tradition, according to which Sennacherib had already reached Pelusium in Egypt, when in a single night his army was rendered helpless by a plague of field-mice which gnawed the bows of the soldiers and the thongs of their shields (Herodotus, II. 141). Since the mouse was among the Egyptians a symbol of pestilence we may infer that the basis of truth in the legend was a deadly epidemic in the Assyrian camp; and this is the form of calamity which is naturally suggested by the terms of the biblical narrative. The scene of the disaster is not indicated in the O.T. record, and there is no obstacle to the supposition that it took place, as in the Egyptian legend, in the plague-haunted marshes of Pelusium. The silence of Sennacherib about his misfortune is quite intelligible.

the angel of the LORD] is associated with the plague in 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16.

37, 38. The flight of Sennacherib, and his death at Nineveh. If the passage be a combination of two parallel narratives, the second ends with v. 36, while vv. 37 and 38 form the conclusion of the first. In the Hebrew, the first words of v. 37 would be the correct continuation of "and when he heard it" in v. 9.

38. The official account of Sennacherib's death as given in the Babylonian Chronicle (Col. iii. 34—38) is as follows: "On 20 Tebet Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was killed by his son in a revolt. [23] years reigned Sennacherib in Assyria. From 20 Tebet to 2 Adar the revolt was maintained in Assyria. On 18 Sivan Esarhaddon, his son, ascended the throne in Assyria." (Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, II. pp. 281 ff.) The event took place in 681, twenty years after Sennacherib's disappearance from Palestine. During these years he claims to have conducted five successful campaigns; but he never found another opportunity to interfere in the affairs of Palestine, and the very fact that he lived so long may have been forgotten in Judah before this history was written.

Nisroch his god] No Assyrian deity of this name has as yet been found on the monuments.

Adrammelech and Sharezer] Both Assyrian names. The former is named as the parricide by profane historians (although not in the inscriptions); the latter only here. The motive for the crime is explained by the statement of Polyhistor, that Sennacherib had placed Esarhaddon

escaped *into* the land of Armenia : and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

- 38 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in
2 order : for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,
3 and said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that* which *is* good in thy sight. And
4 Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the LORD to
5 Isaiah, saying, Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the

on the throne of Babylon during his own lifetime, an act which would naturally excite the jealousy of his other sons (Budge, *History of Esarhaddon*, p. 2).

the land of Armenia] R.V. *Ararat*. *Ararat* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Assy. *Urartu*, Armenia.

CH. XXXVIII. HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY.

1. *In those days*] The incident must have preceded by some months the embassy of Merodach-Baladan, the probable date of which will be considered in the Introduction to ch. xxxix. The order of the chapters cannot be chronological, and the vague expression "in those days" need not perhaps mean more than "in the time of Hezekiah." If, as Delitzsch and others have supposed, ch. xxxviii. f. stood before xxxvi. f. in the original document, the note of time would naturally refer to some other events in Isaiah's biography which had been previously narrated. The best justification of this hypothesis is the solution it furnishes of the chronological difficulties presented by this group of chapters.

Set thine house in order] Lit. "Give commandment to thy house," the last duty of a dying man (2 Sam. xvii. 23). An example of what is meant may be found in David's elaborate death-bed charge to Solomon (1 Ki. ii. 1—9).

2. *turned his face toward the wall*] (cf. 1 Ki. xxi. 4) an instinctive expression of the feeling that he was alone with God in this bitter moment.

3. *with a perfect heart*] Lit. "with a whole heart," one absolutely devoted to Jehovah. Cf. 1 Ki. viii. 61, xi. 4, xv. 3, 14, where the expression occurs with the addition of the words "with Jehovah." The motive of this prayer is clearly expressed in the Song of Thanksgiving which follows (see vv. 11, 18, 19).

4. In 2 Ki. xx. 4 we read that "afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court," this message came to him. So quickly was the king's prayer answered. A somewhat similar instance of the revocation of one prophetic communication by another is that of Nathan in the matter of the building of the Temple (2 Sam. vii. 3, 4 ff.).

LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. And this *shall be* a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which

5. The verse is greatly abbreviated from 2 Ki. xx. 5. After *Hezekiah* the words "the captain of my people" are omitted; and also the sentence "I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord," which follows the word *behold*. It cannot be doubted that the historical book here preserves the original text.

the God of David thy father] for whose sake this special mercy is vouchsafed to the king (cf. ch. xxxvii. 35; 2 Ki. xx. 6).

fifteen years] That the number was arrived at by calculation on the part of the historian is not to be believed. If there be calculation in the case at all, it is in the date of ch. xxxvi. 1, which may very possibly be an inference from this prediction combined with the statement of 2 Ki. xviii. 2. (See on ch. xxxvi. 1.) In any case the assumption that the prophecy was exactly fulfilled is a legitimate one, and the fourteenth year of Hezekiah must be accepted as the true date of this sickness. The only question is whether the writer of ch. xxxvi. 1 may not have fallen into error by supposing that the date of Hezekiah's sickness fixed the time of Sennacherib's invasion. On that point see the Chronological Note, pp. lxxvif. Since the king began to reign in his twenty-fifth year, it is after all not a long life that is here promised to him. His reign was to be doubled.

6. This is the only verse which would lead us to suppose that the events synchronised with Sennacherib's invasion; but its genuineness is doubtful. An unqualified assurance of deliverance is hardly consistent with the prophet's attitude to the king's policy at the time supposed. Hezekiah was deeply committed to projects of rebellion in the first years of Sennacherib's reign, and a political message from Isaiah in those circumstances could hardly fail to be accompanied by a warning against the tendency which prevailed at the court. Since the verse breaks the connexion between vv. 5 and 7, and since the latter part is a reproduction (in 2 Kings an exact reproduction) of ch. xxxvii. 35, there are some grounds for supposing that it has been inserted by the compiler of the books of Kings.

7, 8. After v. 6, 2 Kings describes the prophet's prescription for the malady (see on v. 21). The account of the sign also is given in a much fuller form there. It was granted at the express request of the king (see v. 22), who had not his father's fear of "tempting the Lord" (ch. vii. 12). Allowed to choose between a "going forward" and a "going backward" of the shadow, he decided for the latter as not so "light" a thing (i.e. less conceivable); when, at Isaiah's intercession, the desired thing happened.

is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

9 The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness :

8. The R.V. has (after *Ahaz*) the phrase "with the sun," which is wrongly taken by the A.V. as an adjunct of the word "dial" (*the sun dial*). It is necessary, however, to strike out the preposition "with" (as in the LXX.). The whole verse then reads literally: **Behold I will turn the shadow of the steps which the sun has gone down on the steps of Ahaz backward ten steps; and the sun turned back ten steps on the steps which it had gone down.** We must suppose that the "steps," whatever they were, could be seen from the sick-chamber of Hezekiah, to whose mind the sign had an obvious symbolical significance. The retreating shadow, miraculously lengthening the day, was a pledge of the postponement of that "night in which no man can work" which had almost overtaken him. What kind of apparatus is denoted by the "steps of Ahaz" we have no means of determining. It is not clear, indeed, that a regularly constructed sun-dial of any kind is meant: a shadow falling on some flight of steps in the palace-court, and affording a rough and ready measure of time, would sufficiently explain the terms used.

9—20. Hezekiah's thanksgiving for his recovery. This poem, which is not given in the parallel narrative in 2 Kings, must have been inserted here from an independent source. An external mark of the insertion is found in the displacement of vv. 21, 22 from their proper context. The superscription (v. 9) resembles several of those in the book of Psalms, and was no doubt found in the document from which the poem was transcribed. The song, therefore, was in all probability traditionally ascribed to Hezekiah, but whether this judgment rests on historical authority, or merely on its inherent suitability to his circumstances, it is impossible to say. The linguistic evidence seems to point to a late date. The poem, like many of the Psalms, is a record of individual experience, but adapted for use in the Temple worship (v. 20). The experience is that of a man who has been brought face to face with death, who has prayed for life, and has been "heard in that he feared"; but with the reticence which characterises the Psalmists all details of merely personal interest are suppressed with a view to the liturgical use of the poem.

The psalm may be divided into two parts (both indicated in the superscription, v. 9):—

i. vv. 10—14. A description of the writer's anguish and despair in the near prospect of death.

ii. vv. 15—20. His joy and gratitude when assured of his recovery.

9. *The writing of Hezekiah*] According to some commentators we should read "A Michtam of Hezekiah" (changing a letter in the Hebr.).

I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the ¹⁰ gates of the grave :

I am deprived of the residue of my years.

I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in the ¹¹ land of the living :

I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a ¹² shepherd's tent :

I have cut off like a weaver my life : he will cut me off with pining sickness :

The word *Michtam* occurs in the titles of Pss. xvi., lvi.—lx.; but is of uncertain derivation and meaning.

10. *in the cutting off of my days*] R.V. **In the noontide of my days** (lit. "in the stillness of my days"). The phrase has been variously interpreted; but the best sense is that given by the R.V., whether the noon be conceived as the time of rest, or (as in an Arabic idiom) the time when the sun seems to stand still in the heavens. Hezekiah was at the time in his thirty-ninth year. (Cf. "in the midst of my days," Ps. cii. 24.)

the gates of the grave (lit. of Sheol)] Cf. Job xxxviii. 17; Ps. ix. 13, cvii. 18.

I am deprived (lit. "punished") *of the residue of my years*] The verb for "be punished" does not elsewhere bear the sense of "be mulcted" as it must do in this translation. Duhm, with a different division of the verse, renders as follows:—

"I said, In the noon-tide of my days I must depart;

I am consigned (cf. Jer. xxxvii. 21) to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years."

11. Death is the end of all communion both with God and men. To see the LORD is to enjoy the sense of His presence in the appointed acts of worship (see on ch. i. 12). The thought that Sheol afforded no such opportunities of converse with the living God was that which made death a terror to O.T. believers (cf. v. 18; Ps. lxxxviii. 5, &c.).

the inhabitants of the world] The received text has "the inhabitants of cessation" (*hedel*), i.e. "of the place where life ceases," an expression for the underworld. The reading *heled* ("the world") is found in some Heb. MSS.; and is rightly preferred by A.V.

12. Figures setting forth the utter frustration of his hope of life. The first is that of a nomad's tent, easily pitched and soon removed.

Mine age is departed] Render: **My habitation is plucked up** (Cheyne). The sense "habitation" is Aramaic and Arabic, and does not occur again in the Bible (but see on ch. liii. 8). Elsewhere the word means "generation," in the sense of "contemporaries," which is obviously unsuitable here. Then follow two figures from weaving.

I have cut off] Rather: **I have rolled up** (R.V.) as the weaver does

- From day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.
 13 I reckoned till morning, *that*, as a lion, so will he break
 all my bones:
 From day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.
 14 Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter:
 I did mourn as a dove:
 Mine eyes fail *with looking* upward:
 O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.
 15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and
 himself hath done *it*:
 I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my
 soul.

the finished web. *with pining sickness*] should be (as in R.V. marg.)
 from the **thrum**, the threads by which the web is attached to the
 loom.

from day even to night] i.e. apparently "within twenty-four hours."

13. *I reckoned till morning*] R.V. has "I quieted myself until
 morning." It is better to amend the text slightly and read **I cried until
 morning**.

so will he break (better, **he breaketh**) *all my bones*] the crushing effect
 of pain. Cf. Lam. iii. 4.

14. *Like a crane or a swallow*] Rather, as R.V., **Like a swallow or
 a crane**. Both words occur again only in Jer. viii. 7. The want of a
 copula in Heb., and the unsuitability of the verb "chirp" (E.V.
 "chatter") to the note of the crane suggests that the latter may have
 been imported into the text from the passage in Jeremiah. It is wanting
 in the LXX.

I did mourn as a dove] Cf. ch. lix. 11; Ezek. vii. 16; Nah. ii. 7.

with looking upward] lit. **toward the height**, where Jehovah dwells.

undertake for me] **become surety for me** (Job xvii. 3). The image is
 that of a debtor who is being committed to prison.

15, 16. Two extremely difficult verses. As commonly explained,
 v. 15 introduces the second half of the song with an exclamation of
 amazement at the wonderful deliverance experienced. Literally it reads:

"What shall I say? And He said to me—and *He* (emphatic) did it;

I shall walk with leisurely pace all my years—because of the
 bitterness of my soul."

The words *he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done* it would
 refer to the promise of recovery through the prophet, and the fulfilment
 of it. This whole conception of the verse is vigorously criticised by
 Duhm, who renders thus:—

"What shall I speak and say to Him—since *He* has done it?

I toss to and fro all my sleeping time—because of the bitterness
 of my soul."

The Hebr. word rendered "toss to and fro" is found again only in
 Ps. xlii. 4, where it means "to walk in festal procession." Duhm in

O Lord, by these *things men* live, 16
And in all these *things is* the life of my spirit:
So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.
Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: 17
But thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the
pit of corruption:
For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.
For the grave cannot praise thee, death can *not* cele- 18
brate thee:
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy
truth.
The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do this* 19
day:

this passage is disposed to connect it with a noun found in Job vii. 4 ("tossings to and fro").

16. The thought expressed by E.V. is somewhat as follows: "By such Divine words and deeds (*v. 15*) men are preserved in life; and by such things my spirit is revived." No one will say that this is either good Hebrew or a natural sense; and the text is almost certainly corrupt. The verb "live" closely resembles an Aramaic verb (*ḥivvāh* occurring several times in the O.T.) meaning "to declare"; and this was evidently read by LXX.: *περὶ αὐτῆς γὰρ ἀνηγγέλη σοι*. Starting with this, Duhm makes the verse read:

"Lord, of this doth my heart make mention to Thee,
Give rest to my spirit and recover me, &c."

His emendations however are somewhat sweeping.

so wilt thou...live] The first verb is impf. (fut.), the second imperat. *recover me* is literally "give me health."

17. *Behold, for peace...bitterness*] (lit. "it was bitter to me, bitter"), i.e. the bitterness of affliction was mercifully overruled so as to yield "peaceable fruit" through his recovery (cf. Heb. xii. 11).

but thou hast in love...pit] Lit. (according to the Hebrew text) "and thou hast loved my soul out of the pit..."—a pregnant construction of perhaps unexampled boldness. The true reading probably is "thou hast kept back my soul, &c." (*ḥāsaktā* for *ḥāshaqtā*).

For *pit of corruption* render **pit of annihilation**.

cast...behind thy back] An image for utter forgetfulness: 1 Ki. xiv. 9; Neh. ix. 26; Ps. l. 17. The Psalmist recognises in his deliverance the pledge that his sins are forgiven and forgotten.

18, 19. The deepest motive for the saint's gratitude is that only on earth can he know the joys of fellowship with God.

18. With the thought of this verse comp. Ps. vi. 5, xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 10—12, cxv. 17.

the grave] Sheol.

The father to the children shall make known thy truth.

20 The LORD *was ready* to save me:

Therefore we will sing my songs *to* the stringed instruments

All the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay *it* for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover.

22 Hezekiah also had said, What *is* the sign that I shall go up *to* the house of the LORD?

19. *the father...truth*] Cf. Ps. xxii. 30, xlviii. 13, 14, lxxi. 18, lxxviii. 3, 4.

20. Perhaps a liturgical appendix, adapting the psalm for congregational use. Hence the transition from 1st pers. sing. to 1st pers. plu.

we will sing...instruments] Rather, **we will play with string music** ("we" including the Levites or the congregation). The word for "string music" is *Nēgînôth*, which occurs frequently in the headings of the Psalms. Here and in Hab. iii. 9 it has the suffix of 1st pers. sing. ("my"), which it is very difficult to explain.

21, 22. Cf. 2 Ki. xx. 7, 8. The verses are obviously out of their true places here. The pluperfects in the English Translation are ungrammatical (Driver, *Tenses*, pp. 84 ff.), and we must render **And Isaiah said...And Hezekiah said.**

21. *lay it for a plaister*] Lit. **rub it.** *Lump* should be **cake**, as in R.V. Many commentators suppose that the malady from which Hezekiah suffered was the plague; and Gesenius explains that the appearance of the "boil" would be a hopeful, though not a certain, symptom of recovery. He adds that the application of figs is resorted to by modern Arabian and Turkish physicians in cases of pestilence.

CH. XXXIX. THE EMBASSY OF MERODACH-BALADAN.

Merodach-Baladan (in Babylonian *Marduk-habal-iddina*) was king of Babylon for twelve years (721—709) in the reign of Sargon, and again for six months (*circa* 704) in the reign of Sennacherib. He was originally the Chaldæan ruler of Bit-Yakin, a small state in southern Babylonia; and his long and finally unsuccessful struggle for the throne of Babylon is interesting as foreshadowing the future ascendancy of the Chaldæans in the dynasty of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. That he was able so long to hold his own against a powerful monarch like Sargon was largely due to his practice of forming alliances with the enemies or disaffected subjects of the Assyrian Empire, a policy of which this chapter furnishes an illustration. Since his final overthrow by Sennacherib took place before the latter's invasion of Palestine, it is quite certain that ch. xxxix. (and consequently xxxviii.) is to be dated before ch. xxxvi. f. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether this embassy belongs to the earlier and longer period of his reign or to the brief interval of power at the beginning of Sennacherib's reign. The vague date "in those days" at the beginning of ch. xxxviii.

At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king 39
of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he
had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And 2
Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of
his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices,

seems of course to favour the latter view. On the other hand it might
be urged that six months was barely long enough for the tidings of
Hezekiah's recovery to reach Babylon and for the messengers to reach
Palestine. But the question is really not to be settled from internal
evidence; and the chief reason for deciding for the earlier period is that
it appears to afford the best solution possible of the chronological diffi-
culties connected with the reign of Hezekiah. We shall assume there-
fore that this incident actually occurred in or soon after the fourteenth
year of Hezekiah (i.e. about 714). This was the period preceding
Sargon's chastisement of Philistia (see on ch. xx.), when, as he himself
informs us, Judah along with the neighbouring states, while "bringing
presents to Asshur my lord" was "speaking treason." That Judah was
spared on this occasion must have been due to a timely submission
on the part of Hezekiah. And indeed the narrative before us produces
the impression that while the king was greatly flattered by the attention
shewn to him, he yet did not commit himself to a formal treaty, but left
himself free to be guided by the development of events. It follows of
course from this view that the events of ch. xxxviii. f. have no con-
nexion with those of ch. xxxvi. f. and that the date of ch. xxxvi. is
wrongly placed.

1. *Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan*] The form "Berodach"
in 2 Ki. xx. 12 is less correct. Marduk-habal-iddina is described in the
monuments as "son of Yakin"; but this is no reason for doubting the
identity of the person. The latter is probably his dynastic title.

letters] a letter, as ch. xxxvii. 14. LXX. adds *καὶ πρέσβεις*, i.e.
"ambassadors," whose presence is assumed in the next verse.

for he had heard] So in 2 Ki. xx. 12 correctly. The text here reads
strictly "and he heard." The motive here specified was merely a
pretext to veil the real political object of the mission. This appears
clearly enough in what follows. According to 2 Chron. xxxii. 31 the
embassy was prompted by scientific curiosity with regard to the miracle
of the sun-dial.

2. *And Hezekiah was glad of them*] Not only was his vanity flat-
tered, but the arrival of the envoys fell in with political projects to
which he was even then too ready to lend his ear. The reading is
decidedly preferable to the flat and meaningless "heard of them" in
2 Ki. xx. 13 (not LXX.).

the house of his precious things] R.V. marg. has "house of his
spicery," identifying the word with one found in Gen. xxxvii. 25, xliii.
11. But this rendering has only an apparent justification in the "spices"
mentioned below. The right meaning is given by the Targ. and Peshito:
treasure-house. According to the younger Delitzsch it is the Assyrian
bit nakanti. It is obvious that Hezekiah's treasury was still full, which

and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah
 3 shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, *even* from
 4 Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that *is* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that
 5 I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah,
 6 Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days

could not have been the case after the ruinous fine exacted by Sennacherib (2 Ki. xviii. 14—16).

the spices, and the precious ointment] **the spices and the fine oil.** (Cf. 2 Chron. xxxii. 27.) These natural products of the land were probably stored for commerce and are mentioned as a source of wealth.

the house of his armour] better: **his armoury.** It is probably the same as the "house of the forest (of Lebanon)" in ch. xxii. 8.

3. The prophet's appearance on the scene shews that he suspected the king of coquetting with a foreign alliance, although it is remarkable that on neither side is there any explicit allusion to the political aspect of the affair. Perhaps the first evasive answer of Hezekiah betrays a consciousness of wrong-doing.

from a far country] He answers that part of the question which involved least embarrassment. It is hardly likely that he means to hint that an alliance with so distant a country was out of the question; more probably he will excuse himself on the ground of hospitality to strangers who had come so far. It is noticeable that he does not mention the ostensible motive of the embassy.

5. *Hear the word of the LORD*] Isaiah's tone is threatening, because he sees in this thing a sin against Jehovah. It was not necessary to specify wherein the offence consisted; king and prophet understood each other perfectly. The reception of an embassy from the sworn enemy of the king of Assyria was in itself an act of rebellion likely to precipitate a conflict which Isaiah strove to avert; and the childish vanity displayed by Hezekiah, his pride in earthly resources, and his readiness to enter into friendly relations with the powers of this world, were tendencies against which Isaiah's ministry had been a continuous protest. All these tendencies sprang from a single root, the lack of that absolute faith in Jehovah as the all-sufficient guide and protector of the nation which was the fundamental article of Isaiah's political programme.

6, 7. This is the only occasion on which a prophecy of the Babylonian Exile appears to be attributed to Isaiah. It is not easy to reconcile such a prediction with the particular circumstances in which it is

come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried *to* Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of 7 thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to 8 Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

reported to have been uttered. The announcement naturally left on Hezekiah's mind the impression that his own days would be spent in peace, whereas in reality the most critical juncture of his reign still lay before him, and it is hardly credible that Isaiah should have disclosed to him the remote fate of his descendants, without warning him of the more immediate and personal consequences of his folly. This difficulty would be removed if we could hold that the prophecy was uttered *after* the deliverance from Sennacherib; but we have seen that this supposition is inadmissible on historical grounds. A more serious consideration is that Isaiah's Messianic ideal leaves no room for a transference of the world-power from Assyria to Babylon, or the substitution of the latter for the former as the instrument of Israel's chastisement. He uniformly regards the intervention of Jehovah in the Assyrian crisis as the supreme moment of human history and the turning point in the destinies of the kingdom of God, to be succeeded immediately by the glories of the Messianic age. The prediction, moreover, is without a parallel in the prophetic literature of Isaiah's age (in Mic. iv. 10 the clause "and thou shalt go to Babylon" is inconsistent with the context, and in all probability a gloss). These objections are partly neutralised by the hypothesis that some nearer and more limited judgment is referred to, such as the imprisonment of Manasseh in Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11) in the reign of Assurbanipal. The terms of the prophecy fall short of a deportation of the people and a destruction of the city, only the fate of the treasures and the royal family being indicated. No great stress, however, can be laid on this limitation (comp. a somewhat similar case in Am. vii. 17) and the suggestion fails to harmonise the prediction with Isaiah's known anticipation of the course of events. It is possible that the prophet's actual communication had reached the late writer of this narrative in a form coloured by subsequent events.

7. The words *which thou shalt beget* seem, according to usage, to imply that the calamity would fall on Hezekiah's own children.

8. *Good is the word of the LORD*] An expression of pious resignation, including repentance; cf. 1 Sam. iii. 18.

there shall be peace and truth (or *steadfastness*) *in my days*] In the Old Testament the postponement of a calamity is always regarded as a mitigation of its severity; see 1 Ki. xxi. 28f.; 2 Ki. xxii. 18ff. Hezekiah's words probably mean no more than that mercy is mingled with judgment in the sentence pronounced on him.

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*THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES*

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—
A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH

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ISAIAH

CHAPTERS XL.—LXVI.

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PREFACE

BY THE

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE present General Editor for the Old Testament in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges desires to say that, in accordance with the policy of his predecessor the Bishop of Worcester, he does not hold himself responsible for the particular interpretations adopted or for the opinions expressed by the editors of the several Books, nor has he endeavoured to bring them into agreement with one another. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion in regard to many questions of criticism and interpretation, and it seems best that these differences should find free expression in different volumes. He has endeavoured to secure, as far as possible, that the general scope and character of the series should be observed, and that views which have a reasonable claim to consideration should not be ignored, but he has felt it best that the final responsibility should, in general, rest with the individual contributors.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK.

CAMBRIDGE,

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* * * The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS OF THE PROPHECY.

THE division of the Book of Isaiah into two parts at the end of ch. xxxix., although indicated by no superscription, is at once suggested by the intervention of the narrative section, chs. xxxvi. —xxxix., and is fully justified by the character of the last 27 chapters. Whether these chapters form a single continuous prophecy, or whether, as some think, the work of different hands can be distinguished, they are pervaded by a unity of spirit and aim which separates them from the undisputed prophecies of Isaiah. It is this part of the book which has gained for that prophet the name of the Evangelist of the Old Testament, and whoever the author may have been, that designation aptly characterises the tendency of the chapters. Critical writers, as is well known, generally assign them to an anonymous prophet, living in the latter part of the Babylonian Exile ; and the grounds on which this conclusion rests will naturally have to be stated at some length in this Introduction. They will be found to be all of the nature of what is called *internal evidence*, being drawn from indications furnished by the book itself of the circumstances in which it was composed. It would, however, be a mistake to allow this critical question to dominate the enquiry into the nature and teaching of the prophecy. The proper course obviously is first of all to gain as clear an idea as possible of the prophecy itself, and then to consider what light is thereby thrown on its origin. Accordingly, the substance of this and the two

following chapters will be independent of the controversy as to authorship and date, and will for the most part represent views in which critics of all shades of opinion are agreed. If it should be necessary occasionally to refer to points of agreement or disagreement with the earlier part of Isaiah, this will be only for the sake of illustration, or to avoid repetition, and certainly not from any desire to prejudge the issue whether the author be Isaiah or another.

The prophecy may be conveniently divided into three nearly equal sections : chs. xl.—xlviii., xlix.—lv., and lvi.—lxvi.¹

(A) Chs. xl.—xlviii. The Restoration of Israel through the instrumentality of Cyrus.

(1) The Prologue (ch. xl. 1—11) is a magnificent composition, setting forth in striking imagery and in language of exquisite beauty the theme of the whole discourse. The opening words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," which have been finely compared to "the first ripples of light in a cloudless dawn²," contain the burden of the prophet's message.

¹ The well-known division into three parts of nine chapters each was first proposed by Friedrich Rückert in 1831, and has found its way into many commentaries. It is based on the observation that the words, "There is no peace, saith the Lord (or, my God), to the wicked" recur at the end of ch. xlviii. and lvii., and that the last verse of ch. lxvi. expresses a similar thought. But the idea that these words were introduced by the author *as a refrain* is not borne out by an examination of the structure of the prophecy. Between ch. lvii. and lviii. there is no break, but a very close connexion, and the supposed refrain completes in the most natural manner the idea of the previous verse. In ch. xlviii. 22, on the other hand, the words are so alien to the context that to some commentators they strongly suggest the hand of a compiler. The division as a whole, therefore, must be dismissed as "entirely superficial, and worth nothing except as an aid to the memory" (A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, 2nd Series, Vol. vi. p. 88). At the same time many of the best critics agree with Rückert in regarding chs. xl.—xlviii. as the first great section of the volume. A large number of characteristic ideas (see p. 79), as well as a few peculiarities of style, are confined to these chapters, and if the last verse was inserted by an editor to mark the close of a division he appears to have been guided so far by a sound instinct. In the remainder of the book it is not quite so easy to fix on any particular point as marking more than others a new beginning; but on the whole the greatest break seems to occur at the end of ch. lv. (so Duhm and Cheyne, and many of the latest writers).

² G. A. Smith, *Exposition*, Vol. II. p. 75.

They mean that the night of Israel's affliction is far spent and the day of deliverance is at hand (*vv.* 1, 2). The prophet hears the music of heavenly voices, telling him of spiritual agencies already in motion which will issue in the restoration of the exiles to their own land (*vv.* 3—5); assuring him also that all human resistance must fail before the eternal energy of the Divine word (*vv.* 6—8). The return from captivity is conceived (as throughout these first nine chapters) as a triumphal march of Jehovah through the desert at the head of His ransomed people; and the prelude ends with the arrival of the ideal messengers who call upon Jerusalem and the cities of Judah to behold their God (*vv.* 9—11).

(2) The following paragraph (*vv.* 12—31) introduces a theme frequently recurring in the first nine chapters, the incomparable power, the unsearchable wisdom, in a word, the *infinity* of Israel's God. In order to remove the despondency which has settled on the minds of his fellow-exiles (*vv.* 27—31) the writer dwells at length on the evidences of Jehovah's might and wisdom, to be observed especially in the works of creation (*vv.* 12—17, 26), and takes occasion to shew the inherent absurdity of idolatry (*vv.* 18—20), in proof that such gods as those of Babylon are powerless to thwart the purposes of the one true God.

(3) In ch. xli. the prophet touches for the first time on the historical situation which is to be explained by the truths just unfolded. (*a*) The sudden appearance of Cyrus as a great world-conqueror engrosses the attention of mankind. This fact is splendidly dramatised, in the conception of a great assembly of the nations, to whom Jehovah propounds the questions, Who has raised him up? Who has given him such astonishing success (xli. 1—7)? (*b*) Turning aside for a moment to assure Israel, Jehovah's servant, that he has nothing to fear from these political convulsions, which on the contrary shall issue in his final deliverance and victory (*vv.* 8—20), the prophet (*c*) resumes and completes the argument left unfinished at *v.* 7 (*vv.* 21—29). That Jehovah, and not any of the heathen gods, has raised up Cyrus is proved to demonstration by the fact that He

alone has foreseen and predicted the event ; this *argument from prophecy* is another prominent feature of chs. xl.—xlviii.

(4) (a) Ch. xlii. 1—4 is the first of four portraits of Jehovah's *ideal* Servant which are amongst the most remarkable passages in the book. This great personage is here introduced as the object of Jehovah's peculiar regard, and as endowed with the Divine spirit for the accomplishment of his mission, which is to teach the true religion to the world (*vv.* 1). His manner of working is described as unobtrusive and gentle and helpful ; yet he fails not nor is discouraged until his labours are crowned with complete success (*vv.* 2—4). (b) In the next verses (5—9) the portrait just sketched is made the ground of encouragement to Israel, Jehovah, as it were, pledging His Godhead to the fulfilment of the ideal in the people's experience. (c) The prophet's thoughts being thus led forward to the redemptive act through which Israel's destiny will be realised, he breaks into a short lyric outburst of praise (*vv.* 10—12) ; after which Jehovah Himself is represented as arousing Himself from His long inactivity to bring about the deliverance of His people (*vv.* 13—17). (d) In contrast with the ideal of *vv.* 1—4, the condition of Israel, Jehovah's *actual* servant, is next described (*vv.* 18—25). Blind and deaf, ignorant of the meaning of its own history, it has utterly mistaken its true calling, and as a consequence has been overwhelmed by the unspeakable calamity of the Exile, and been brought to the verge of destruction. (e) Yet the Divine election stands immutable ; Israel is still Jehovah's servant, and precious in His sight ; it shall be ransomed at the cost of the most opulent and powerful nations of the world, and its scattered members shall be brought together from all parts of the earth (xliii. 1—7).

(5) (a) But there is at least one function which Israel with all its failures and defects is still capable of performing : it is Jehovah's *witness* to the fact that He has foretold the events that are happening. This thought is again dramatised in a judgement-scene, where the idols are challenged to bring forward, if they can, any similar attestation of their divinity ; it would seem also that, in the very act of witness-bearing, Israel's

eyes are at length opened to the significance of this great truth and the character of its God (*vv.* 8—13). (*b*) In *xliii.* 14 the first explicit announcement of the impending fate of Babylon occurs, introducing a description of the marvels of the new Exodus, for which the way is thus prepared (*vv.* 14—21). (*c*) Israel, indeed, has not merited this deliverance, but Jehovah for His own sake blots out its transgressions and promises to remember them no more (*vv.* 22—28). (*d*) The reconciliation is final and complete; a brilliant future lies before the nation, in which strangers shall esteem it an honour to attach themselves to the religion and the people of Jehovah (*xliv.* 1—5).

(6) *Ch.* *xliv.* 6—23 repeats the argument from prophecy for the sole deity of Jehovah (*vv.* 6—8); confirms this by the most elaborate and sarcastic exposure of the irrationalities of idolatry, that the book contains (*vv.* 9—20); and appeals to the Israelites to lay these truths to heart and cleave to the God who forgives sin and is alone able to deliver (*vv.* 21—23).

(7) The passage *ch.* *xliv.* 24—*xl.* 25 is an important series of oracles dealing mainly with the mission of Cyrus and its effects in the universal diffusion of the worship of Jehovah. (*a*) The subject is led up to in *xliv.* 24—28, a majestic period, where Jehovah, describing Himself as the God of creation and prophecy, at last announces His commission to Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. (*b*) Cyrus is next addressed in person by Jehovah, who bestows on him the title of His anointed (*Messiah*), and promises him an uninterrupted course of victory, at the same time declaring that it is only in the interest of Israel that he is thus honoured (*xl.* 1—7). (*c*) After a short poetic interlude (*v.* 8) the prophet turns to rebuke the murmurs of dissent which this novel announcement calls forth among some of his fellow-exiles (*vv.* 9—13). (*d*) And now at length he reaches what may be regarded as the highest flight of his inspired imagination. As a consequence of the signal exaltation of Israel, achieved through the victories of Cyrus, the conquered nations renounce their idols and do homage to Israel as the people of the one true God (*vv.* 14—17). (*e*) But further, this disclosure of the character and Godhead of Jehovah

becomes the source of salvation to the world at large. What He has always been to Israel,—a God revealing Himself in clear unambiguous oracles,—that the heathen shall recognise Him to be ; and all the ends of the earth shall look unto Him and be saved (*vv.* 18—25).

(8) The next two oracles deal with the fall of Babylon. In ch. xlv. the principal subject is the collapse of the Babylonian state-religion. A striking contrast is drawn between the ignominious flight of the discredited idols, on the back of “weary beasts,” and the unchanging strength of Him who sustains the fortunes of His people through all ages of their history.

(9) Ch. xlvii. is a Taunt-song on the humiliation of the imperial city, personified as a “tender and delicate” woman, reduced from wealth and luxury and power to the lowest depth of degradation.

(10) Ch. xlviii. is largely a recapitulation of arguments unfolded in previous chapters, although these are interspersed with rebukes of the obstinacy of the people, more severe than any hitherto uttered. It closes with a jubilant summons to the exiles to depart from Babylon and proclaim to all the world the story of their redemption.

(B) Chs. xlix.—lv. The work of Jehovah’s Servant and the glorification of Zion.

In the second division of the prophecy several lines of thought, which have been very prominent in the first, entirely disappear. The references to Cyrus and the prediction of the fall of Babylon, the appeal to past prophecies now fulfilled, the polemic against idolatry and the impressive inculcation of the sole deity of Jehovah, all these now familiar topics henceforth vanish from the writer’s argument. But one great conception is carried over from the first part to the second, and forms an important link of connexion between them. This is the figure of Jehovah’s ideal Servant, of which there are three further delineations in ch. xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, and lii. 13—liii. 12. In xlix. 1—6 the Servant himself addresses the nations of the world, expressing his own consciousness of the mission entrusted to him by Jehovah (see xlii. 1—4) and his sense of disappointment

at the apparent fruitlessness of his labour in the past, but relating also how his misgivings have been removed by a fresh disclosure of Jehovah's ultimate purpose in raising him up, viz. to be the organ of His revelation to the whole human race. The passage is followed (as in xlii. 5 ff.) by a promise of the restoration of Israel, based on the portrait just given of the Servant.—Ch. l. 4—9 is again a soliloquy of the Servant, describing his entire self-surrender to the guidance of the Divine word, his voluntary acceptance of the persecution which he had to endure in the discharge of his mission, and his unwavering confidence in the triumph of his righteous cause through the help of Jehovah.—Ch. lii. 13—liii. 12, the last and greatest of the four "servant-passages," is an account of the sufferings and death of Jehovah's Servant, and a prediction of his future glory. The impression made by his death on the minds of his contemporaries leads them at length to recognise his true mission and produces in them a sense of guilt and sorrow for sin which removes the barrier that had separated them from God.

The other conception which chiefly occupies the mind of the prophet in this section of his discourse is that of Zion, figured as a woman now desolate and bereaved, or drunken with the cup of Jehovah's displeasure, but soon to be clothed in beauty and comforted by reunion to her divine Husband and by the return of her children. This image is developed in a series of passages: ch. xlix. 14—26, li. 17—lii. 6, and liv. There are also exhortations to individual Israelites to prepare themselves for the coming salvation, and lay aside the fears which naturally beset them: l. 1—3, li. 1—16, lv.; while lii. 7—10 gives a second description of the arrival of the herald of salvation at Jerusalem (cf. xl. 9 f.). It will be seen that the whole division continues to unfold the programme sketched in outline in the Prologue (xl. 1—11).

(C) Chs. lvi.—lxvi. The future blessedness of the true Israel contrasted with the doom of the apostates.

The third section of the book is less homogeneous in its composition than the two others. In passing from ch. lv. to ch. lvi. the reader is at once sensible of a change of manner and circumstance, which becomes still more manifest as he proceeds.

(1) Ch. lvi. 1—8 is a short independent oracle on the admission of foreigners and eunuchs to the new Israel,—a matter of administrative detail, altogether unlike the lofty idealism of the previous chapters.

(2) Then follows, in lvi. 9—lix. 21, a series of discourses in which the strain of prophetic rebuke predominates over the note of comfort and encouragement. (a) Ch. lvi. 9—lvii. 2 is a strongly worded denunciation of the worthless rulers through whose selfish greed the nation has been left a prey to its enemies. (b) Ch. lvii. 3—13 is addressed to an idolatrous community, perpetuating the illegal worship of pre-exilic Israel, and practising in addition many strange and outlandish superstitions. (c) This is followed in lvii. 14—21 by a promise of forgiveness and redemption to the true people of God. (d) Ch. lviii. states the moral conditions on which the fulfilment of this promise depends, and censures in particular the solemn mockery of the customary fasts, combined as they were with avarice and high-handed oppression. (e) In ch. lix. the prophet in the name of the community confesses the great social evils which prevail within it, and utters a promise that Jehovah will speedily interpose to make an end of unrighteousness and perform the gracious word which He has spoken concerning His people.

(3) Chs. lx.—lxii. form a group by themselves, more akin to the spirit of the earlier section of the prophecy, and having a special resemblance to ch. liv. The theme is the felicity of the ideal Zion of the future, which is depicted with a marvellous wealth of imagery and illustration. The material splendour of the restored city, the righteousness of its inhabitants, the subservience of the Gentiles, and the return of the exiles from all parts of the earth, are the features of Zion's glory which bulk most largely in the eye of the prophet.

(4) In ch. lxiii. the tone again changes. *Vv.* 1—6 are a detached oracle,—one of the most graphic pieces of word-painting in the Old Testament,—the subject being Jehovah's return from a great slaughter of His assembled foes in the land of Edom.

(5) Ch. lxiii. 7—lxiv. 12 is a long prayer and confession put

in the mouth of Israel, the most pathetic and plaintive passage in the whole prophecy.

(6) Chs. lxxv. and lxxvi. contain an alternation of threats and promises, corresponding to the distinction between two classes of hearers which we have already recognised in ch. lxxvii. The contrast is pushed to the utmost extreme: the true believers are assured of an abiding inheritance in the Holy Land, and an existence of more than natural blessedness in the new heavens and the new earth which Jehovah is about to create; while the apostates are threatened with final destruction, leaving their name for a formula of imprecation, and their dishonoured corpses for an everlasting spectacle to the worshippers in the new Temple.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROPHECY.

1. AT the time when this prophecy opens Cyrus has appeared on the stage of history and has gained many important victories. In order to determine more precisely the period thus indicated it will be sufficient to bear in mind the following events in the career of this hero, as elucidated by two inscriptions first published in the year 1880¹. In these Cyrus appears first as king of Ansan, in Elam, the country adjoining Babylonia on the east. Although connected with the royal house of Persia, the particular branch of the family to which he belonged does not appear to have reigned over Persia proper; at all events it is not till the year 546 that he is named as king of Persia. Some years previously he had ascended the throne of Ansan, and speedily gave proof of the commanding ability and energy which were soon to raise him to the front rank among the conquerors of the East. Through the defeat of Astyages in 549

¹ See Sayce, in *Records of the Past*, New Series, Vol. v. pp. 144—176.

he annexed Media to his dominions, and laid the foundation of the great Medo-Persian empire which controlled the destinies of Western Asia for more than 200 years. His next great success was the overthrow of Cræsus, the wealthy king of Lydia, whose capital of Sardis, with its fabulous treasures, fell into the hands of Cyrus in B.C. 540¹. After some months spent in reducing the tribes of "Upper" Asia² Cyrus gathered his forces for the attack on Babylon. This crowning enterprise of his life was carried to a successful issue in 538. "In the month Tammuz [June] when Cyrus in the city of Rutu [?], on the banks of the river Nizallat, had delivered battle against the soldiers of Akkad [Northern Babylonia], when the men of Akkad had delivered (battle) the men of Akkad raised a revolt: (some) persons were slain. On the 14th day (of the month) Sippara was taken without fighting; Nabonidus [last king of Babylon] fled. (On) the 16th day Gobryas [general of Cyrus], the governor of the country of Gutium, and the soldiers of Cyrus without fighting entered Babylon." Such is the unvarnished record of the so-called "Annalistic Tablet" of Cyrus³; the religious aspect of the event is expressed in remarkable language in his "Cylinder Inscription": "Merodach...appointed also a prince who should guide aright the wish of the heart which his hand upholds, even Cyrus, the king of the city of Ansan; he has proclaimed his title; for the sovereignty of all the world does he commemorate his name...Merodach, the great lord, the restorer of his people, beheld with joy the deeds of his vicegerent, who was righteous in hand and heart. To his city of Babylon he summoned his march; he bade him also take the road to Babylon; like a friend and comrade he went at his side. The weapons of his vast army, whose number, like the waters of a river, could not be known, were marshalled in order, and it spread itself at his side. Without fighting and battle (Merodach) caused him to enter into Babylon; his city of Babylon he spared; in a hiding-place Nabonidus the king, who revered him not, did he give into his hand⁴."

¹ Herodotus, I. 73—84.

³ Sayce, *loc. cit.*, p. 162.

² *Ibid.* I. 177.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 165 f.

The allusions to Cyrus in the prophecy make it perfectly certain that the time to which it refers lies between 549 and 538. Cyrus is mentioned as one already well known as a conqueror, and one whose brilliant victories have sent a thrill of excitement through the world. He is spoken of as having been "raised up from the east" (xli. 2, 25; cf. xlv. 11), or "from the north" (xli. 25), as one whom "victory attends at every step" (see on xli. 2), who "comes upon rulers as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay" (xli. 25), who "pursues them and passes on in safety," whose movements are so rapid that he appears not to "touch the path with his feet" (xli. 2, 3). Now Cyrus could not have been recognised under such descriptive allusions prior to the conquest of Astyages in 549, when he first became a prominent actor in the political arena. But indeed the language employed is so striking and emphatic as to suggest an even later date, and to make it probable that the prophet has in view the impression created by the first intelligence of the memorable victory over Cræsus in the year 540.

On the other hand, the capture of Babylon is still in the future. Cyrus has not yet reached the climax of his success; "the doors of brass and the bolts of iron" have still to be broken before him; "treasures of darkness, the hidden riches of secret places" are still to be given to him (xlv. 2, 3). It is he who "*shall* execute Jehovah's purpose on Babylon" (xlviii. 14), who "*shall* rebuild My city and let My exiles go free" (xlv. 13; cf. xlv. 28). But this final conquest, bringing in its train the sovereignty of the world (xliii. 3, xlv. 14, li. 5), is imminent; "Jehovah has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations" (lii. 10) and the decisive blow is about to be struck. The standpoint of the prophecy, therefore, is certainly intermediate between 549 and 538, and most probably about 540 B.C.

2. In perfect harmony with these references to Cyrus are those to the circumstances of Israel. The nation is in exile, but on the eve of deliverance. Jerusalem has undergone a period of hard servitude on account of her sins, but the term of it has now expired; her punishment has been more than adequate (xl. 2). Israel is a people robbed and spoiled, snared in

holes and hid in prison-houses (xlii. 22); the captive crouches in the dungeon (li. 14); the people are repeatedly spoken of as prisoners or bound (xlii. 7, xlix. 9). Such expressions are no doubt largely metaphorical, but the metaphors can denote nothing but a national captivity. The oppressing power is Babylon, the imperial city, still called "mistress of kingdoms" (xlvi. 5), who has laid her yoke very heavily on the aged (v. 6). She has said to Israel, "Bow down that we may go over," and caused her to make her back as the ground and as the street to them that go over (li. 23); and it is from Babylon that the exiles are summoned to make good their escape (xlvi. 20, cf. lii. 11 f.). Meanwhile Palestine is a waste and ruined land (xlix. 8, 19, li. 3, lii. 9); Jerusalem is frequently likened to a widowed and bereaved mother mourning the loss of her children, though now comforted with the promise of their restoration (xlix. 14 ff., li. 17 ff., lii. 1 f., liv.). No such calamity as these accumulated allusions imply had ever befallen Israel except in the half century that followed the destruction of the state by the Chaldeans (B.C. 586).

3. One other fact may be noticed, as shewing how completely the prophet's point of view is identified with the age of the Exile. Amongst the arguments most frequently adduced for the deity of Jehovah and against idolatry is the appeal to prophecies fulfilled by the appearance of Cyrus (xli. 26, xlii. 9, xliii. 8—10, xlv. 21, xlv. 10). What prophecies are referred to is a question of some difficulty, which need not detain us here. It is obvious that whatever they were the argument has no force except as addressed to persons for whom the fulfilment was a matter of experience. To the men of an earlier age such an appeal could only appear as confusing and fallacious, being an attempt to illustrate *ignotum per ignotius*; hence we must conclude that the prophecy was directly intended for the generation of the Exile, and could produce its full effect only on them. It must be observed that neither the appearance of Cyrus nor the captivity of Israel is ever *predicted* in this prophecy; they are everywhere assumed as facts known to the readers. Predictions do occur of the most definite kind, but they are of events

subsequent to those mentioned and lying in advance of the standpoint which the prophet occupies. A distinction is often made by the writer between "former things," which have already come to pass, and "new things" or "coming things" (xli. 22, xlii. 9, xliii. 9, 18 f., xlv. 7, xlv. 11, xlv. 9, xlviii. 3—8), and in some cases it seems clear that by "former things" he means the fulfilment of earlier prophecies concerning Cyrus, while the "new things," now first announced, are such events as the triumph of Cyrus, the salvation of Israel, and the conversion of the world to the worship of Jehovah. Even on the supposition that the chapters were written by Isaiah, 150 years before any of these occurrences, it still remains true that he does not formally predict the rise of Cyrus, but addresses himself to those who have witnessed it and only require to be told what developments will result from it in the unfolding of Jehovah's purpose¹.

¹ The passages cited above in illustration of the circumstances presupposed by the prophecy are all, it will be observed, taken from the first two divisions (chs. xl.—lv.). It would be possible to supplement the references in some particulars from the later chapters. Not, indeed, with regard to Cyrus, or the argument from prophecy based on his conquests, for these topics are never introduced after ch. xlviii.; but undoubtedly with regard to the desolation of the country (lviii. 12, lxi. 4, lxii. 4, lxiv. 10) and a return of exiled Jews (lvi. 8, lx. 4, 8, lxvi. 20). The reason for not treating these passages as quite on the same footing with those cited in the text is that in the later chapters (lvi.—lxvi.) there are allusions of an opposite character which seem to imply that those there addressed are the Jewish community of Palestine after the Return. Hence there is some uncertainty whether expressions which at first sight seem altogether of a piece with those of the earlier sections have not in reality a different bearing. In fact, it will be found that with scarcely an exception they are more or less ambiguous in their terms. The desolation of the land, for example, must have continued for some time after the first Return; and it is possible that only the condition of the rural districts is described in lviii. 12, lxi. 4 and lxii. 4. The only place where Jerusalem itself is spoken of as desolate is ch. lxiv. 10 f., and this no doubt raises a certain presumption that the capital is *included* in the parallel expressions. But the passage lxiii. 7—lxiv. 12 presents so many peculiar features that it may be unsafe to generalize from it to the bulk of chs. lvi.—lxvi. In like manner the mention of a restoration of exiles is not inconsistent with the hypothesis of post-exilic origin. The reference may be to the wider dispersion over the civilised world of Israelites whose ingathering continued to be an object of aspiration long after the Jewish state had been reestablished. Even in the verses beginning, "Go through, go through the gates" (lxii,

CHAPTER III.

THE PROPHET'S THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS.

THE religious teaching of chs. xl.—lxvi. has to be considered in the light of the situation sketched in the previous chapter. Although the writer's manner of thinking is more distinctly theological than that of many other prophets, he is nevertheless before all things a prophet, that is, an inspired Interpreter of Jehovah's action in a great crisis of history. No part of the prophetic literature answers more fully to the conception of prophecy implied in the words of Amos: "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, but he revealeth His secret unto his servants the prophets" (Am. iii. 7). The great event in which this prophet recognises the hand of Jehovah, and of which the secret has been revealed to him, is, as has been already indicated, the advent of Cyrus. Just as the teaching of Amos and Isaiah is dominated by the appearance of the portentous Assyrian power, or that of Jeremiah by the approach of the Chaldæans, so the thoughts of this writer crystallise around the historic figure of Cyrus and the astonishing series of victories which have distinguished his career. It is true he is the first prophet who discerns in the signs of the times a Divine purpose which is from the first a purpose of grace towards Israel. His predecessors had all looked on the world-power as the instrument of Jehovah's chastisement of His people, and had anticipated a happy issue only as a second step, after the earthly instrument had been broken and thrown away. But the writer of these chapters has the word "comfort" constantly on his lips; the whole burden of his message is one of consolation and good

10 f.), so closely resembling xlviii. 20 and lii. 10 f., there is nothing to shew clearly that the gates of Babylon are meant. (See, moreover, Zech. ii. 6, 7,—a post-exilic passage).—The question is perhaps one on which it would be premature to offer a positive opinion, and of course this is not the place to discuss it. But since it was impossible to ignore it in the notes, it is right that attention should be called to the difficulty here. Some further observations will be found in Chapter v. below.

tidings ; and he views Cyrus as the chosen agent of Jehovah, not merely in crushing obstacles to the execution of His purpose, but as lending active support in the establishment of His kingdom. Nevertheless the author lives his prophetic life in a time of perplexity and disquietude, when men's hearts failed them for fear ; and it is in the disentanglement and solution of a situation which was to all others a hopeless mystery that he realises his vocation as a prophet.

Like other prophets, too, he sees in the events of the time the immediate precursors of Jehovah's everlasting kingdom of righteousness. The final consummation of God's purposes with humanity lies in germ in the appearance of Cyrus ; in the writer's own graphic phrase, it already "sprouts" before men's eyes (xlii. 9, xliii. 19). And thus he is led to a prophetic construction of the outward course of events in which many things are left obscure, but of which the salient features are as follows : This Cyrus whom Jehovah has raised up to do His pleasure on Babylon is the destined instrument of Israel's emancipation. He shall let the captives go free ; they shall return to Jerusalem in triumphal procession, with Jehovah Himself as their Shepherd,—the wilderness breaking forth before them into springs of water and a luxuriant forest vegetation. The story of this redemption resounds through the world, and the nations, already impressed by the victory of Cyrus, and now convinced that he has been raised up by Jehovah for the sake of Israel, renounce their idolatries and find salvation in the knowledge of the one true God.

The prophet is aware, however, that his hearers are not in a mood to be easily cheered. References to their state of mind are numerous, and nowhere do we find any indication of an enthusiastic response to the prophet's joyful proclamation. When Jehovah came there was no man, when He called there was none to answer (ch. i. 2). Among the exiles were some who are described as "stouthearted, far from righteousness" (xlvi. 12), who rejected the prophet's message and took exception in particular to his designation of Cyrus as the chosen instrument of Israel's release (xlv. 9—13). But the prevalent mood

was one of utter weariness and despondency. Israel said, "My way is hid from Jehovah, and my right passes from my God" (xl. 27; cf. xlix. 14). Dismayed by the might of Babylon, and fearing continually because of the oppressor (li. 13), confronted on every hand by the monuments of a vast system of idolatry, the exiles had given way to gloomy thoughts and doubts of the power or willingness of Jehovah to redeem. To counteract this despairing mood something more was needed than a bare announcement of deliverance. The first requisite was to revive their consciousness of God, to impress them with a sense of His infinite power and resources, and the immutability of His word; and also to impart to them a new and inspiring view of their own mission and destiny as a nation. And to this task the writer addresses himself with all the impassioned and persuasive eloquence of which he is an unrivalled master.

JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL.—The prophet's doctrine of God is, accordingly, the fundamental element of his teaching. The book, it has been well said, "is a structure based upon and built out of the Monotheistic conception, the idea that Jehovah, God of Israel, is the true and only God¹." The author does not differ from earlier prophets in being a monotheist, but he differs remarkably in this that he inculcates the principle almost as an abstract truth of religion, and strives to bring it home to the reason and imagination of his readers. It is perhaps not strictly accurate to say that he sets himself to *prove* any positive truth about Jehovah, although some passages read to us like demonstrations. The existence of Jehovah is assumed, as are also the facts that He is the Creator of the universe and the Disposer of the events of history; and what is built on these assumptions is an attempt to elevate and purify the conceptions of the Israelites and convey to them some worthy idea of what Deity involves. But if anything is made a matter of demonstration, it is the negative conclusion that the idols are not gods, that their helplessness in the face of the facts of history shews them to lack the attributes of Deity, that in short, as there is room for only

¹ A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, 2nd Series, Vol. vi. p. 81.

one God, the God of Israel has alone made good His right to be so regarded.

The prophet's conceptions of what God is in Himself are most fully set forth in the meditation which immediately follows the Prologue (ch. xl. 12—26). The chief thought is contained in the repeated question, "To whom will ye liken God?" (vv. 18, 25). It is the *incomparableness* of Jehovah which the writer seeks to expound and illustrate. This is enforced first of all by an appeal to the works of creation. What sort of Being must He be who "measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" (v. 12). "Lift up your eyes on high and see! Who hath created these [the starry host]? bringing out their host by number, calling them all by name; because of Him who is great in might and strong in power not one is missing" (v. 26). In comparison with such a Being, how insignificant and inappreciable is every form of finite existence! He "sitteth over the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers" (v. 22); "the nations are as a drop from the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance" (v. 15). His purposes in history cannot be thwarted by any political combinations, however powerful; for He "bringeth princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity; hardly have they been planted; hardly have they been sown;...when He bloweth upon them and they wither, and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble" (vv. 23 f.). And if men, singly and collectively, are thus helpless before Him, what shall be thought of those so-called gods which are the work of men's hands? The idol is sufficiently discredited by a description of the process of its manufacture (vv. 18—20); it is not merely a "nonentity" (as Isaiah called it), it is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the very conception of deity.

Thoughts similar to these run through the prophecy, especially the first nine chapters. The question, "To whom will ye liken me?" recurs in xlvi. 5; Jehovah's creative activity is touched upon in xlii. 5, xlv. 7, 12, 18, xlviii. 7, liv. 16, lxv. 17 f.

&c. The argument against idolatry is developed in a series of passages (xli. 7, xlv. 9—20, xlv. 6 f., comp. xli. 23 ff., xlii. 17, xlv. 16, 20, xlv. 1 f., xlviii. 5) which at once arrest attention by their scathing irony and scorn. Idolatry is as it were laughed out of court, treated as an effete delusion which the world ought long to have outgrown. The consciousness of unique Godhead is attributed to Jehovah in such utterances as, "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (xliii. 10), or "I am God, and there is none else" (xlv. 9; cf. xlv. 8, xlv. 6, 14, 18, 21 f.). The same truth is expressed when He is called *Qādōsh* (Holy) absolutely, almost as a proper name (xl. 25); meaning that He alone possesses the attributes that constitute divinity¹. He is the "First and the Last" (xli. 4, xlv. 6, xlviii. 12), unchanging through all ages, an "Everlasting God," inexhaustible in power and wisdom (xl. 28).

But though Jehovah is thus transcendently exalted, His relation to the world and men upon it is not one of negation or indifference. He did not create the earth for a waste, but to be inhabited (xlv. 18); He is present in all ages of history, calling the generations from the beginning (xli. 4), and moulding their destinies in accordance with His world-wide purpose of salvation. In pursuance of His far-reaching and unsearchable designs He has raised up Israel, calling it from the ends of the earth (xli. 9) to be the organ of His revelation, and now He has raised up the Persian king Cyrus to be the instrument of His final victory over heathenism. In connexion with this unceasing activity of Jehovah in the affairs of men, great stress is laid upon His knowledge of the future and His habit of predicting it. The heathen gods are repeatedly challenged to prove their claim to deity by instances of unambiguous predictions subsequently verified (xli. 22 f., xliii. 9, xlv. 7); while Israel, on the other hand, is appealed to as a witness that Jehovah has foreseen and foretold the future (xliii. 10, xlv. 8). This peculiar test of divinity might appear to be a concession to the mode of thought of the heathen, whose religion consisted in great part in the search for divine prognostications of coming

¹ See Vol. I. pp. xlv f.

events. But it has also a positive value for the prophet's own mind, as evidence that events are prearranged by Jehovah in accordance with a fixed and intelligible plan whose goal is the redemption of Israel and the manifestation of the Divine glory to all mankind.

Of the moral (as distinguished from the metaphysical) attributes of God, the most important is His *righteousness*. The prophet's use of this word is somewhat difficult, and it appears to denote more than one aspect of the Divine character¹. It is plain enough that what is called retributive righteousness, or dealing with men according to their strict deserts, is far too narrow an idea to explain some of its most striking applications. Righteousness is the quality displayed in the raising up of Cyrus (xlv. 13), in the sustaining of Israel, which is ascribed to Jehovah's "right hand of righteousness" (xli. 10), and in the calling of the ideal Servant of the Lord (xlii. 6). But further it is exhibited in Jehovah's manner of revealing Himself; He is One who "speaks righteousness" (xlv. 19); One who in contrast with the false gods is approved as righteous by the verification of His prophecies (xli. 26); a word goes forth from His mouth in righteousness and shall not return (xlv. 23). The general idea suggested by these various usages is perhaps trustworthiness in word and deed, and particularly in the perfect correspondence between word and deed. This implies that Jehovah's actions are all regulated by a consistent and firmly maintained principle, so that when He speaks He but reveals the inner principle which is the true motive of His action; and when He is said to uphold Israel or to raise up Cyrus "in righteousness" the meaning is that He does so in pursuance of a steadfast purpose which He may be relied on to carry through. And since His purpose is ultimately a purpose of salvation, we can understand how so frequently in the prophecy the idea of righteousness tends to become merged in that of salvation. It would, of course, be a paradox to speak of salvation as a divine *attribute*, although the paradox would very nearly represent an important element in the prophet's idea of God. The power and readiness to save men is a standing characteristic of

¹ See Appendix, Note II.

Jehovah, which can be predicated of no other god; He is a "righteous and saving God" (xlv. 21); besides Him there is no Saviour (xliii. 11; cf. xlv. 15, 21; xlix. 26). But, speaking strictly, salvation is the outward act which gives effect to Jehovah's purpose; and so we find several passages where righteousness itself ceases to be an attribute and becomes a name for the external manifestation in which the attribute embodies itself (xlvi. 13, li. 6, 8, lvi. 1 *b*). The same truth is expressed in the frequent application to Jehovah of the verb "redeem" or the epithet "Redeemer" (xli. 14, xliii. 1, xlv. 6, 22 f., 24, &c.; see p. 20). "Salvation," however, is a term of wider import than "redemption." The latter expresses what Jehovah does for His own people of Israel; but the former, although used in the first instance of the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, is a spiritual blessing in which all mankind have an interest. "Israel is saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation" (xlv. 17); and the heathen, recognising this, are invited to avail themselves of the same privilege: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else" (v. 22)¹.

¹ The idea of salvation has an instructive history. In Arabic the root *wasi'a* means to be wide, roomy, spacious, &c.; and hence the Hebr. verb "to save" (which is the causative of this) means primarily "to make room for one," "to give one freedom or space to move in." Even in this form the word contains the germ of a valuable religious idea, salvation being essentially freedom for the normal expansion of man's true life. In the O.T., however, it is always used with express reference to some pressure or impediment, the *removal* of which constitutes the essence of the act called salvation or the state of salvation which results from it (יָשַׁע, יִשְׁעָה, תִּשְׁעָה). In the earlier literature these names have mostly a secular and political application, denoting "succour" in a military sense, or (more frequently) "victory." The religious sense grew naturally out of this. At all times it was recognised that Jehovah is the source of deliverance or victory; but at least from the time of the Exile the centre of gravity of the idea was shifted from the temporal act of deliverance to the partly spiritual blessings which were secured by it. Salvation becomes (as in this prophecy) a comprehensive term for that decisive vindication of Israel's cause which was the foundation of all national well-being. At the same time "these words seldom, if ever, express a spiritual state exclusively; their common theological sense in Hebrew is that of a material deliverance attended by spiritual blessings" (see Driver, *Notes on Samuel*, p. 90).

These are perhaps the most characteristic features in the idea of God as presented in these chapters. It is after all an imperfect statement of the Prophet's conception of God, which is indeed so rich and full as almost to baffle analysis. "Jehovah is to him a living moral Person, possessing all the powers of personality in a degree transcending conception, and shewing all the activities of moral being in perfection¹." "It would be easy to find in the prophet proof-texts for everything which theology asserts regarding God, with the exception perhaps of the assertion that He is a spirit, by which is meant that He is a particular kind of substance. Neither the prophet nor the Old Testament knows anything of a Divine essence. It does not say that God is spirit, but that He has a spirit; and by spirit is not meant a substance, but an efficiency. The spirit of God is God operating in any way according to the ineffable powers which He possesses as a moral person²."

It may be remarked in contrast to what was said of Isaiah in Vol. I. p. 1, that the divine tenderness receives full and emphatic expression, as was to be expected from the character of this prophecy. "In an outburst of wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee" (liv. 8). Jehovah is compared to a shepherd, gathering the lambs in His arms and carrying them in His bosom, and gently leading those that give suck (xl. 11); and the pathos of this image is even exceeded by one of the latest in the book: "as a man whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (lxvi. 13). These expressions shew that with all the prophet's insistence on the transcendent perfection of Jehovah, there is no diminution of the vivid sense of His personal being. These chapters contain anthropomorphisms as bold and striking as any to be found in the Old Testament. Jehovah is described as a man of war eager for the fray, as crying like a travailing woman, as gasping and panting with suppressed fury (xlii. 13 f.). He arms Himself for conflict with His enemies, putting on righteousness as a breastplate, clothing

¹ A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, 2nd Series, Vol. VIII. p. 255.

² *Ibid.* p. 253.

Himself with zeal as a cloke, &c. (lix. 16—18). In lxiii. 1—6 He is represented coming up from a great slaughter of His foes, striding in the greatness of His might, and speaking of the day of vengeance that was in His heart. Such delineations are no doubt imaginative, but the images express a truth, and belong as much to the prophet's conception of God as the more abstract and lofty ideas which stand side by side with them in the book.

ISRAEL, THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH. Remarkable as is the prophet's contribution to the Biblical doctrine of God, it is surpassed in importance and originality by his teaching with regard to the mission of Israel. The very grandeur and universality of his conception of Jehovah appears to necessitate a profounder interpretation of Israel's place in history than any previous prophet had explicitly taught. It might readily appear that a Being so exalted and glorious as Jehovah is here represented to be could not enter into special relations with any particular people of the earth, and that Israel could be no more to Him than the children of the Ethiopians (Am. ix. 7). This inference, which for a special purpose the prophet Amos seemed almost ready to draw, would obviously be fatal to the religion of revelation. It is little to say that this prophet does not accept the conclusion suggested; he repudiates it in the most direct and emphatic manner, declaring that since Israel was precious in His sight, Jehovah gives Egypt as its ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in its stead (xliii. 3). And whether he was conscious of the problem latent in his conceptions or not, it is certain he has provided a solution of it, which lies in the thought that Israel is *elect for the sake of mankind*. Jehovah, as we have already seen, cherishes a purpose of grace towards the whole human race (xlv. 18 ff.), and the meaning of His choice of Israel is that He uses it as His instrument in the execution of that world-wide purpose of salvation.

This view of Israel's position amongst the nations is expressed in the title "Servant of Jehovah," which is applied to the people in passages too numerous to quote (xli. 8, xlii. 19 ff., xliii. 10, 12, xlv. 1 f., 21, xlv. 4, xlviii. 20). In most of these places there is no room for doubt as to the subject which

the writer has in his mind. It is the historic nation of Israel, represented in the present chiefly by the community of the Exiles, but conceived throughout as a moral individual whose life and consciousness are those of the nation. The personification is at times extremely bold; as when Israel is said to have been formed "from the womb" (xliv. 1 f.), or when Jehovah speaks of it as having been "borne from the womb," and promises to carry it "even unto old age and hoar hairs" (xlvi. 3, 4); at other times the collective nature of the conception is suffered to appear (xliii. 12, &c.). Still no one who reads the passages can suppose for a moment that anything else than the actual people of Israel is intended. Nor is the writer of these chapters the first who employs the name "servant" in this sense. It is used by Ezekiel in ch. xxviii. 25, xxxvii. 25, where Jehovah speaks of "the land that I have given to Jacob my servant¹," and it is found also in Jer. xxx. 10, in a sentence which might have been written by our prophet: "Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah, neither be dismayed, O Israel," &c. (So also Jer. xlv. 27.) In itself the designation might mean much or little. As expressing the relation between the people and its national deity, it might mean simply "worshipper" (see Josh. xxiv. 29; Neh. i. 10; Job i. 8; Dan. vi. 20 and often); and this is certainly included; Israel is the Servant of Jehovah as His worshipper, His client, through whom His name is perpetuated among men. But as certainly the prophet's idea goes far beyond this. Comparing the different connexions in which the name occurs, we find the thoughts associated with it to be these two: *first*, that Israel has been adopted by Jehovah of His free grace and brought into a peculiar relation to Himself. The words used are many: "called," "chosen," "created," "formed," "made"; but all these refer to one fact, the formation of the people at the time of the Exodus from Egypt or (it may be) the call of Abraham from Chaldæa. The *second* thought is that of a mission entrusted to the nation of Israel by Jehovah. This is naturally suggested by the word "servant"; and it is made still

¹ It is possible, however, in these passages, to understand the expression of Jacob as the ancestor of the nation.

clearer by ch. xlii. 19: "Who is blind but my servant? or deaf as *my messenger that I send?*" and other passages. In so far as the historic Israel is concerned, this mission is fulfilled more by experiences in which it is passive than by its voluntary activity. It has proved itself "blind" and "deaf"; i.e. spiritually unfit for its high vocation (xlii. 19, 20, xliii. 8). Yet as the prophetic nation it has already served an important purpose; it is Jehovah's *witness* to the truth of His prophecy, and through this to the reality of His divinity (xliii. 10, 12, xlv. 8). And this function shall be still more fully realised when the great deliverance through Cyrus has taken place, and the nations of the world shall behold this crowning demonstration of Jehovah's Godhead, and turn to Israel with the confession, "Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God" (xlv. 14 ff.). In that day Israel shall not be wholly a passive instrument of Jehovah's great purpose; for "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring....One (i.e. from among the heathen) shall say, I am Jehovah's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall inscribe on his hand 'To Jehovah,' and be titled by the name of Israel" (xlv. 3—5).

But there is another class of passages where this application of the title "Servant of Jehovah" to the actual Israel does not suffice (xlii. 1—4, xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, lii. 13—liii. 12). We must not overlook the close resemblance between these passages and those spoken of in the last paragraph. The ideas included in the term "servant" are precisely the same in the two cases. New features are added to the description which are inapplicable to the nation as a whole, but still the conception of the office of the ideal Servant does not go beyond the two elements of an election by Jehovah, and a commission to be discharged in His service. What makes it impossible in the last group of passages to suppose that the Servant means Israel simply, is not so much the intense personification of the ideal (although that is very remarkable, and weighs with many minds); it is rather the character attributed to the Servant and the fact that he is distinguished from Israel by having a work to do on behalf of

the nation. There are passages which, as usually translated, appear to speak of him as the agent in Jehovah's hand of effecting the release of Israel and of restoring it to its own land (xlii. 7, xlix. 8, 9). No doubt, these passages are susceptible of a different interpretation, which makes Jehovah Himself the immediate author of the deliverance, and allows the identification of the Servant with the nation as a whole (see the Notes). There are others, however, where a distinction seems inevitable. The Servant is one who endures persecution and opposition from his own countrymen (l. 6—9), and dies the death of a martyr at their hands (liii. 1—9). His sufferings and death constitute an atonement for the sins of his people, so that with his stripes they are healed (liii. 4—6, 8). He is one also who is in conscious and perfect sympathy with Jehovah's purpose in raising him up; he is neither blind nor deaf, but alert and sensitive and responsive to the divine voice (l. 4, 5). So conscious is he of his mission and so eager to succeed in it, that he speaks of himself as depressed and discouraged by its apparent failure so long as it was limited to the conversion and instruction of his own people (xlix. 4), and correspondingly cheered when it is revealed to him that his work has a larger scope, even the gathering of the whole race into the fold of the true religion (xlix. 5, 6). To this wider outlook there is attached the assurance of a signal success (xlii. 1, 4), which shall excite the astonishment of the nations and potentates of the world (xlix. 7, lii. 13—15, liii. 10—12).

The question, who is meant by the Servant of Jehovah in these delineations is perhaps the most difficult problem in the exposition of these chapters. Of the many views that have been propounded (see Appendix, Note 1.) there are but two which call for consideration here.

1. A large number of expositors hold that the term "Servant of Jehovah" always, in some sense, denotes Israel. They regard it as inconceivable that the prophet should apply the same title to two distinct subjects without so much as a hint that there is a double application in his mind. It is all the more difficult to suppose that this should be the case, because the predicates associated with the title are essentially identical in all

its uses. The Servant is throughout one called and upheld by Jehovah, and destined to be the organ through whom He carries out His purpose of establishing His universal kingdom. It is true that the subject of the personification cannot in every case be the actual Israel, or the nation *en masse*, for it has been shewn that the characteristics of the Servant are in some instances the opposite of those displayed by the bulk of the people. But if the Servant cannot in such passages be the literal historic nation, he may still be Israel according to its true vocation and destiny, the ideal Israel which has existed in the mind of God from the beginning, and which would yet emerge on the stage of history in the nation purified and redeemed from the sorrows of the Exile. It may be urged against this theory that the Servant is represented as one who has an experience and a history behind him (xlix. 4 ff., l. 6, liii. 1—9); and to many it may appear a contradiction that an ideal should have a history of the kind depicted. A still more serious difficulty is thought to lie in the fact that the Servant labours and suffers for the good of Israel, and in particular is the agent of its deliverance from captivity. These objections are forcible, but they are partly met by the consideration that the ideal has been approximately realised in a section of the people who had worked for the conversion of their nation, and on whose minds there had dawned the more glorious hope of being a light to the Gentiles. The conception is not free from difficulty, but there is nothing unnatural in the supposition that the experiences of this godly kernel of Israel should be ascribed to the ideal which is partly manifest in them or that this ideal when personified should be called by the name of Israel. And the fact that he is the agent of the people's redemption may be explained in a similar way: the ideal stands for the destiny of the nation, and since it is for the sake of the ideal embodied in the Servant that Jehovah in His providence brings to pass the redemption of Israel, the whole process of deliverance might, in the personification, be ascribed to the Servant.

2. Other writers, however, are not satisfied with this explanation, and think that the Servant of Jehovah must in some cases

be an individual yet to arise, who shall embody in himself all the characteristics that belong to the divine idea of Israel. It is a question of inferior importance whether the figure be a modification of the conception of the Messianic king, or an independent creation, which was only shewn by the fulfilment to be identical with the Messiah of other prophets. Now such a conception is in itself perfectly intelligible and natural. We might suppose, for example, that the author took up the expression, "Servant of Jehovah," and under the guidance of the Spirit of God threw out a portrait of what the ideal Servant of the Lord must be, and that there was imparted to him the conviction that an individual answering to this portrait would appear in the immediate future. But in the connexion in which the idea occurs in this prophecy, the explanation is encumbered by certain difficulties. Besides the exegetical difficulty arising from the application of the same title to subjects entirely different, there is this further objection that the course of events as conceived by the prophet does not appear to afford space for the evolution which it is necessary to suppose. The Servant on the hypothesis has yet to appear (for it is impossible to think that the writer speaks of a contemporary known to him), has to be misjudged, rejected, maltreated and put to death by his countrymen ; then the thoughts of his generation concerning him have to undergo a revolution (ch. liii. 9) ; and only after all this has taken place can the people look for his resurrection and the deliverance from exile which he is to effect. The process described obviously demands time, and we cannot help asking whether it is credible that this should be the meaning of the prophet who penned the hasty summons to escape from Babylon (xlvi. 20, lii. 11, 12) and gives many another indication that he regards the deliverance as imminent. If, on the other hand, the Servant be a personification of the ideal of Israel, the greater part of the process lies already behind the prophet. The popular misapprehension of the Servant's mission, his persecution, his martyrdom, have been accomplished in the persons of those Israelites in whom the ideal of Israel was partly exhibited ; the revulsion of feeling, so profoundly conceived and described in ch. liii., is perhaps a process which

the prophet sees taking place around him ; and all that remains for the future is the Servant's rising from the dead, which is, on this theory, but a figure for the national restoration.

Each hypothesis, therefore, has its own peculiar attractions and difficulties ; and it is natural that commentators should differ as to which furnishes on the whole the most satisfactory solution. Perhaps the point that requires most to be insisted on as a matter of fair historical interpretation is that in the prophet's mind the crisis of the Servant's career is somehow bound up with the fortunes of Israel in the age of the Exile. "Not to raise the question of the Servant here, whether he be Israel or another, the way in which the prophet himself takes up his own words towards the end of his prophecy, and, speaking of Israel restored, says, 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light' (lx. 3), shews that at any rate the Servant shall come into communion with the Gentiles through Israel redeemed, and in this way become their 'light.' Any missionary enterprises of individuals, however exalted, could not occur to the prophet. Like all prophets of the Old Testament he operates with nations and peoples. And if the nations are to receive 'light' through Israel, it will be through Israel, again an imposing people before the world's eyes, just as the Law goes forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. ii.)¹."

The value of the conception as a prophetic delineation of the character and work of our Lord is in no way affected by the view we may be led to adopt regarding its inception in the mind of the prophet. All Christian interpreters agree that the ideal has been fulfilled but once in history, in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom all the features of the divine ideal impressed on Israel have received adequate and final expression. Perhaps we may go further and say that to us it is clear that the ideal could only be realised in a personal life at once human and divine ; only, we have no right to say that this must have been equally evident to the prophet in his day. The significance of his teaching does not lie in any direct statement that in some future age an individual should arise bearing this image,—a

¹ A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, 2nd Series, vii. p. 91.

statement which he never makes—; it consists in the marvellous degree in which he has been enabled to foreshadow the essential truths concerning the life and mission of the Redeemer. This is a fact which nothing can obscure, and which is attested for us, if it needed attestation, by the application of these passages to Christ in the New Testament. But just as it is certain that the prophecy was not fulfilled in the precise way that the writer expected (*viz.*, as an element of Israel's restoration from Babylon), so it is a legitimate question for historical exegesis what kind of basis the ideal had in his thoughts,—“a real or an ideal man, a man of flesh and blood, who, as he foresaw, would appear in the world, or an ideal man, in one sense the creation of his own mind, though in another sense existing from the moment of Israel's call and creation, all down its history, and to exist for ever¹.”

ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES.—The state of things which follows the redemption of Israel is an age of universal salvation in which all nations share in the blessings that flow from a knowledge of the true God. That Israel is to enjoy a religious primacy among the peoples of the world might be assumed from the general position of the Old Testament on this subject, and is expressly asserted in ch. lxi. 5, 6, where the Jews are spoken of as the future priesthood of humanity. The manner in which the world is to be converted to the religion of Israel and of Jehovah is variously represented. In the first place, it is the direct result of the victories of Cyrus, the “Anointed” of Jehovah. For this purpose Jehovah has raised him up, “that men may know from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside Me” (xlv. 6). The effect on the heathen nations is described in *vv.* 14—17 of the same chapter; and it is noteworthy that it is not merely a negative effect, leading them to repudiate their false gods, but involves some positive revelation of the character of the God of Israel. “Only in thee (Israel) is God, and there is none else; there is no God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O Saviour-God of Israel” (*vv.* 14, 15). Of the same nature are passages where the forthputting of Jehovah's

¹ A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, VIII. p. 450.

might is spoken of as the means of convincing men of His Godhead : "mine arms shall judge the peoples ; the isles shall wait for me, and on mine arm shall they trust" (li. 5 ; cf. lii. 10, lxvi. 19, &c.). In the second place, the conversion of the heathen is the work of Jehovah's ideal Servant, and is accomplished partly by his doctrine ("the isles wait for his teaching," xlii. 4) and the prophetic word which is placed in his mouth (xlix. 2), partly by the spectacle of his startling elevation from extreme abasement to the highest influence and glory (lii. 13—15). He is thus set for a "light to the Gentiles," to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth (xlix. 6) ; he "shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgement (i.e. true religion) in the earth" (xlii. 4). The attitude towards the Gentiles expressed in these "servant-passages" is singularly sympathetic and even appreciative. They are likened to "crushed reeds" and "smoking wicks" (xlii. 3) ; that is, they are conceived as possessing some natural virtue, which is ready to expire for lack of a true faith, but which the Servant's tender and helpful ministry will strengthen and fan into a glowing flame. Once more, in the later chapters of the prophecy, the salvation of the heathen is ascribed to the impression made by the unimagined splendour of the new Jerusalem, which is the one centre of light in a benighted world. "For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples ; but upon thee shall Jehovah arise and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (lx. 2, 3). The conception of the future kingdom of God becomes perhaps on the whole less ideal and more material towards the end of the book than in the early chapters. The blessedness of Israel contains moral and spiritual elements (lx. 21, lxi. 3, 11, lxii. 2, lxv. 24, lxvi. 10—13, &c.) ; but great stress is laid on its external magnificence and prosperity ; on the architectural beauties of Jerusalem (liv. 11 f., lx. 13, 17), on its wealth (lx. 5—7, 9, 13, 16, lxi. 6, lxvi. 12) and security in the enjoyment of temporal blessings (lvii. 13, lxii. 8 f., lxv. 9 f., 21 ff.), and its abundant population (xlix. 17 ff., liv. 1 ff., lxvi. 7 ff.). So the relation of the Gentiles to the true God is represented as one of subservience to Israel, the people of God :

they shall "bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of thy feet" (xlix. 23; cf. lx. 14), placing their wealth at the disposal of Israel (lx. 6 f., 11, 16, lxi. 6, lxvi. 12) and performing menial offices in its service (lx. 10, lxi. 5). But the subjection is on the whole represented as a voluntary one on the part of the nations, as is shewn by their goodwill in escorting the exiles back (xlix. 22, lx. 4, 9, lxvi. 20), and the honourable function assumed by them as guardians of the new community (xlix. 23, lxvi. 12). They are animated by a sincere desire to share in the religious privileges which are dispensed through Israel, and willingly acknowledge the superior position belonging to it, as the seed which the Lord hath blessed (lxi. 6, 9). The thought expressed by these images is still the universal diffusion of the true religion; the Temple becomes a "house of prayer for all peoples" (lvi. 7), and "all flesh" comes to worship before Jehovah at Jerusalem (lxvi. 23).

CHAPTER IV.

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE PROPHECY.

AN attempt must now be made to present a summary of the evidence for and against the Isaianic authorship of chs. xl.—lxvi.¹ In doing so it is right to begin with the arguments that have led a majority of critics to regard the prophecy as a work composed towards the close of the Exile². Tradition has its prescriptive

¹ The present chapter is largely indebted to Driver's admirable (and of course much fuller) statement of the evidence in his *Isaiah*², pp. 185—212.

² Döderlein, in 1775, was the first modern scholar who took up this position. Before then the traditional view does not seem to have been questioned except by the Jewish commentator Aben Ezra († 1167 A.D.), who, in very obscure language, appears to hint that the title of the book does not guarantee the authorship of every part of it, any more than in the case of the books of Samuel, of which Samuel himself could only have written the first 24 chapters (his death being recorded in 1 Sam. xxv. 1). Döderlein has been followed, among others, by Gesenius, Ewald, Hitzig, Knobel, Umbreit, de Wette, Bleek, Bunsen, Cheyne, Kuenen, Reuss, Duhm, Oehler, A. B. Davidson, Orelli, König, Driver,

rights, and its assertions are not to be questioned except on adequate grounds. But where, as in the present case, it is challenged by a large body of critical opinion, it is necessary to form some estimate of the value of this opinion before proceeding to test the traditional view which opposes it. Following the example of Driver we may arrange the internal evidence under three heads : (1) that derived from the historical presuppositions of the prophecy; (2) that furnished by the prophet's conceptions; and (3) that of his style and language.

1. By far the most important element in the critical argument is the inference to be naturally drawn from the *historical situation* presupposed by the prophecy, as described in Chapter II. It is impossible here to add anything to what was there said; and it is the less necessary to do this, since the case is freely admitted by the ablest opponents of the critical position to be as stated¹. It may therefore be taken as proved that the prophet's apparent position is in the Captivity, and it only remains to be considered

G. A. Smith, Kirkpatrick, Delitzsch (in the 4th Ed. of his *Comm.* 1890), &c. Amongst the defenders of the Isaianic authorship the best-known names are those of Hengstenberg, Hävernick, Drechsler, Delitzsch (down to about 1880), Stier, Rutgers, Kay, Nägelsbach, Douglas, &c.

¹ Delitzsch, writing in 1857 as a defender of the Isaianic authorship, says: "The author of Isa. xl.—lxvi. finds himself amongst the exiles, and preaches to them with a pastor's most particular concern for their varied moral circumstances. ... If the author had another situation actually present before him, he is as it were completely detached from it. In vain one looks in the course of these 27 chapters for an indication that the prophet distinguishes his ideal from his actual present, that he turns back from Babylon, where he is in spirit, to the yet undestroyed Jerusalem, where he receives his message, that his consolation and admonition ever turn aside from the people of the Exile to the people of the Holy Land, from the future generation to his own contemporaries. This nowhere happens; he lives and moves entirely in the Exile, there and nowhere else is the home of his thoughts" (Drechsler's *Isaiah*, III. p. 389). Hengstenberg's admissions are less sweeping, but perhaps on that account all the more significant. "The prophet, in the whole of the second part, assumes his standpoint *as a rule*... in the time when Jerusalem was conquered by the Chaldeans, &c.... In this period he thinks, feels and acts; it has become to him the present, from which he looks out into the future, yet in such a manner that he *does not everywhere maintain this ideal standpoint*" (*Christologie*, II. 195). Similar testimonies could be quoted from other writers.

whether it is credible that his actual position should be different from this.

No question is here raised of the *possibility* of such a projection of the prophetic standpoint into the remote future as is implied in the assumption that Isaiah wrote these chapters. The only question is whether the phenomenon be probable, judged by the analogy of prophecy itself. Now it is perfectly true that the prophets do sometimes take up an ideal standpoint from which events really future are spoken of as if they were past. But no passage can be found which presents any real parallel to the case before us if Isaiah be the writer of this prophecy. In all other instances the adoption of a future standpoint is but a sudden and transient flight of the prophet's imagination, from which he speedily reverts to his actual present; no example can be produced of a prophet immersing himself, as it were, in the future, and gathering round him all the elements of a definite and complex historical situation, and forecasting from it a future still more distant. Moreover, none of the alleged parallels violate the invariable rule that the prophets address themselves in the first instance, and chiefly, to the men of their own time. Their descriptions of the future are meant for the instruction and guidance of their own contemporaries, whether the tenses used be past or future. But if Isaiah wrote these chapters he absolutely ignores his contemporaries, alluding to circumstances of which they were not cognisant, and using arguments (p. xx above) which had no force for them. There is therefore nothing in the nature of prophecy to lessen the inherent improbability that the prophet's actual standpoint is at variance with what is acknowledged to be his ideal standpoint. Nothing seems left for the consistent upholders of the traditional theory but to admit that the phenomenon is unique, and to urge (as Stier does) that there are other unique facts in history which no one dreams of questioning. That again is perfectly true, and if the fact were established no one would have a right to disbelieve it merely because nothing like it could be found elsewhere. But so long as the probability of the fact in itself is under discussion, to admit that it is unique is virtually to concede the whole matter in dispute.

By some, however, it is denied that the exilic standpoint is consistently maintained¹, and expressions are cited (principally from chs. lvi.—lix.) which are thought to shew that the writer lived before the Exile. These passages have an important bearing on the unity of the prophecy, a point on which something will have to be said in Chapter v.² In the present argument the unity of the book must be assumed, for obviously if that be abandoned the passages in question will speak only for themselves, and will not affect the authorship of the much more important parts of the prophecy where no such references occur. Let us suppose, then, that the allusions are really to the age of Manasseh, and that Isaiah was then alive and might have witnessed the state of things there described; what we have to consider is, For whose benefit are these descriptions penned? If it were seriously maintained that they are directly addressed to the contemporaries of Isaiah's old age, there would be some plausibility in the contention that he is the writer of them. But this is not said by any believer in the unity of the prophecy. It is admitted that, like the rest of the book, they are spoken to the generation of the Exile. And if this be so, it is at least as likely that they were written by a prophet living in the Exile (who may have availed himself of older written material) as that they were prepared for this purpose beforehand by Isaiah himself. In either case the implication must be that the exiles shared the guilt of their forefathers' idolatries, as not having disowned them by a genuine repentance; and that idea is perhaps more natural, certainly not less natural, in the mind of an exilic prophet, than in the mind of one living five generations before.

Another argument is based on the repeated allusions in the prophecy to predictions already fulfilled. Strangely enough it has been supposed that these predictions must be those of the prophecy itself, and from this assumption the inference is deduced that it must have been written long before the fulfilment in the age of the Exile. This is almost as much as to say

¹ See the quotation from Hengstenberg on p. xl, above.

² See pp. lv ff.

that the prophecy must have been written before it was written. It makes the book to be at once a prediction and an appeal to the fulfilment of its own prediction in proof of its divine authority, a thing which is certainly without analogy in the prophetic literature. The writer is responsible for no such confusion. He nowhere says or implies that the fulfilled predictions were uttered by himself, still less that they are contained in this book. He distinguishes in the clearest manner between the predictions that have come to pass and those that still await their verification¹. He himself claims to be the medium of new prophecies concerning the deliverance of Israel and the glorious future to follow, but he does not claim to be the author of those to which he triumphantly appeals as evidences of the Divine foreknowledge. What prophecies they were that he had in view we cannot now determine, but they were predictions of the rise and conquests of Cyrus, and these are events which he himself never predicts but always assumes as known.

The reader must be left to form his own judgement on the considerations thus far submitted. But unless they can be neutralised by evidence from some other quarter it is difficult to resist the conclusion that they constitute a strong presumption in favour of the exilic authorship of the prophecy.

2. We have next to compare the *leading ideas* of the prophet's theology, as described in Chapter III., with those characteristic of Isaiah (Vol. I. pp. xliii—lxiii). Arguments from this source may seem to many less cogent than either those derived from historical allusions or those based on a comparison of language. It may be thought that a prophet's ideas, being communicated to him through divine inspiration, are independent of the ordinary laws of human thinking. Or, again, it may be said that the ideas in the second part of the book are the development of those in the first, and that it is impossible to distinguish the development which takes place in a single mind from that which is wrought out in the course of several generations. But a thoughtful reader of the Old Testament would be slow to entertain the first of these suggestions, because it is absolutely

¹ See p. xxi above.

certain that the prophetic inspiration was not an influence which suppressed the human individuality of the writers or suspended the normal operations of their minds. And when every allowance is made for the possibility of development within the limits of the individual mind, it still remains in the highest degree improbable that a prophet like Isaiah, who through a long life operates with one set of distinctive conceptions, should in the end abandon them, and adopt others of a different character.

There is a difference, (*a*) first of all, in the conception of God as presented in the two parts of the book. The writer of chs. xl. ff. loves to expatiate on the infinitude and eternity of Jehovah, on His incomparableness, on the fact that He is the universal Creator, the bestower of Life, the omnipresent ruler of history. Universality, indeed, may be said to be the distinctive feature in the writer's thoughts about God. These truths are no doubt implicitly contained in Isaiah's idea of God, but we search his undisputed prophecies in vain for any direct inculcation of them. If they do not belong of necessity to a later stage of revelation, they are at least more intelligible in an age when Israel's views of the world had been expanded by the breaking up of the political system in which Isaiah's life was spent, and by direct contact with the power and civilisation of the greatest empire of the world. (*b*) Again, one of Isaiah's most characteristic doctrines is that of the elect remnant of Israel, which is to survive the judgement and inherit the promise of the future. This doctrine is not, indeed, wholly absent from the later chapters (see lix. 20, lxxv. 8, 9), but it occupies a very insignificant and subordinate place and "is not more prominent than it is in the writings of many later prophets¹." (*c*) On the other hand, the mission and destiny of Israel as a whole are expounded in these chapters in a manner to which there is no parallel in the uncontested writings of Isaiah. (*d*) To take one more example, perhaps the most striking of all, the central position occupied by the Messianic King in the writings of Isaiah is assumed in chs. xl. ff. by the entirely distinct figure of the Servant of Jehovah. It

¹ Driver (*Isaiah*², p. 206), who instances Am. v. 15, ix. 9; Mic. ii. 12, v. 7 f.; Zeph. iii. 13; Jer. iv. 27, xxx. 11, xxxi. 7.

is possible (though denied by most expositors) that there is a single allusion to the Messianic King in ch. lv. 3, 4. But even if this be the case, it only illustrates the wholly secondary position which the idea holds in the writer's thinking. Nor can it be supposed that the figure of the Servant of Jehovah is a form into which that of the Messiah might have developed at a late stage in Isaiah's career; it is a new creation, resting on different analogies, an idealisation not of the King, but of the Nation. Many other points of difference might be adduced, if space permitted; but these are perhaps sufficient. They relate to features which are distinctive, on the one side or the other, and there are no conceptions at all distinctive in which the two sections of the book agree. Whatever weight, therefore, may be assigned to these considerations, it is at least undeniable that they point rather to diversity than to identity of authorship.

3. The evidence of *style* and *language* is very decidedly against the probability that Isaiah is the author of chs. xl.—lxvi. The general style of these chapters presents in many respects a strong contrast to that of Isaiah. The difference is one to be felt rather than described; and it may readily be felt, even through the medium of a translation. Speaking broadly, it may be said that Isaiah's style is distinguished by force and compression, while that of the later chapters is profuse and flowing, with a marked tendency to amplification and repetition¹. Isaiah, with the exception of a few favourite and graphic phrases, rarely repeats himself, and never dilates, but the writer of chs. xl.—lxvi. constantly reverts to a few fixed themes, in language which might be monotonous if it were not always impressive. In illustration of this full and expansive manner of expression, two stylistic peculiarities may be mentioned: (1) the duplication of the opening word of a sentence or of some other emphatic word (xl. 1, xliii. 11, 25, xlviii. 11, 15, li. 9, 12, 17, lii. 1, 11, lvii. 6, 14, lxii. 10, lxv. 1)²; and (2) the habit of attaching a series of descriptive participial (or relative) clauses to the name of God, or Israel, or Cyrus (see xl. 22 f., 28 f., xli. 8 f., 17, xlii. 5, xliii. 16 f., xlv. 7, 18, xlvi. 10 f., &c., and especially the splendid passage xlv. 24—28)

¹ König, *Stilistik* &c., p. 174.

² *Ib.* p. 156.

A corresponding difference of imaginative quality may also be detected : each writer is gifted in an unusual degree with the sense of the sublime ; but the sublimity of Isaiah's images is that of concentrated (often destructive) energy, while the later writer's imagination revels chiefly in the thought of physical magnitude (the spacious heavens, the innumerable starry host, the mountains, the coast-lands, &c.). There is besides a strain of pathos in the imagery of the later part of the book which is absent from that of Isaiah (see Driver, *Isaiah*², pp. 182 ff.).

But the linguistic argument is capable of being brought to a definite test by a comparison of the words and phrases characteristic of the two portions of the book. There is of course a large number of expressions common to both, and imposing lists of such expressions have been drawn up for the purpose of shewing that the style is the same. But on examination these lists shrink to very insignificant dimensions, and really prove little more than that both sections are written in good Hebrew¹. The only coincidences which arrest attention are the three following : (1) Isaiah's designation of Jehovah as "the Holy One of Israel," which occurs fourteen times in chs. xl.—lxvi., and only five times outside the book of Isaiah. This is undoubtedly an important link of connexion. But it has to be observed that a phrase like this, expressing an important theological idea, is just one of those likely to be borrowed by one writer from another, and therefore, unless supported by other resemblances, it hardly counts in the argument for unity of authorship. (2) The

¹ For example, a list of 34 such words is given by Cheyne (not of course with the object of proving identical authorship) in his *Introduction*, pp. 251 ff. If the reader will take the trouble to go through this list, and strike out (1) words which are found in chs. i.—xxxix. only in passages probably not written by Isaiah, and (2) those found only once in either part of the book, and therefore not as a rule distinctive of its style, he will find that not more than *six* remain. These are "*seek Jehovah*," *Jacob*, "*house of Jacob*," "*high and lifted up*," *tôrāh* (= instruction), and a rare form of the preposition *from*. All these except the fourth are frequent in other writings. A list of 7 divine titles (*ibid.* p. 254) is equally indecisive, except as regards "*the Holy One of Israel*," which is discussed above.

divine title "Mighty One (*'ăbîr*) of Israel (or Jacob)" occurs in ch. i. 24, xlix. 26, and lx. 16 (also in Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. cxxxii. 2, 5). The coincidence is not important, since the phrase is obviously borrowed by the various writers from the blessing of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 24). Moreover ch. lx. 16 is clearly a quotation from xlix. 26. (3) The formula "saith Jehovah," with the imperfect tense instead of the usual perfect. This is found in ch. i. 11, 18, xxxiii. 10, xl. 1, 25, xli. 21, lxvi. 9; also in Ps. xii. 5. It must be admitted that this is a stylistic peculiarity of the kind which would establish literary identity, but being an almost solitary instance, it has little weight, and is more than counterbalanced by the contrary evidence now to be adduced.

Over against this somewhat slender array of coincidences we have to set a large number of characteristic expressions in which the two writings differ. König¹ justly remarks that in this discussion special importance attaches to those slighter and less significant elements of discourse where one word might indifferently be substituted for another, so that a marked preference for any particular idiom can only be due to the literary habit of the author or his age. He instances the following cases of this kind as characteristic of the second part of Isaiah (the list is here slightly abridged and corrected in some points):—

(1) *'aph* (=also, with various shades of meaning): 25 times in chs. xl.—xlviii.; never in undisputed portions of Isaiah (? xxxiii. 2).

(2) *bal* (negative particle): eight times; never in Isaiah (unless ch. xxxiii. 20—24 be written by him).

(3) *hēn* (=behold): about twenty-one times; twice in Isaiah (xxiii. 13, xxxii. 1; ? xxxiii. 7).

(4) *zû* (relative pronoun): xlii. 24, xliii. 21; never in Isaiah.

(5) *lěma'an* (=in order that): sixteen times; once in Isaiah (v. 19).

(6) *mē'ôd* (=very): xlvii. 9, lvi. 12, lxiv. 9, 12; in Isaiah xxxi. 1.

(7) *pē'ullāh* (=work, reward): xl. 10, xlix. 4, lxi. 8, lxii. 11, lxv. 7; nowhere in Isaiah.

(8) *çedeq* (=righteousness): about seventeen times; in Isaiah only i. 21, 26, xi. 4 f., xxxii. 1.

¹ *Offenbarungsbegriff des A. T.* Vol. I. pp. 211 f.; *Einleitung*, p. 322.

(9) *sās, sason, masōs* (=rejoice, joy): some fourteen times; three times in Isaiah.

(10) *tōhū* (=chaos, nothingness): about eight times; in Isaiah once (xxix. 21).

(11) *lē'ōlām* (=for ever): xl. 8, xlvii. 7, li. 6, 8, lx. 21; and *tāmīd* (=continually): xlix. 16, li. 13, lii. 5, lviii. 11, lx. 11, lxii. 6, lxxv. 3. Isaiah uses *lānēṣaḥ* (xxviii. 28), and *lē'ad* (xxx. 8).

(12) *'ōth* is written for *'eth* (=with) in liv. 15, lix. 21;—a mark of late style.

(13) *lāmō* (an unusual suffix): xliii. 8, xlv. 7, 15 (?liii. 8).

To these should be added:

(14) *yaḥad, yaḥdāv* (=together): a peculiar pleonastic idiom illustrated by xli. 19, 20, and occurring some fifteen times in chs. xl.—lxvi.

The following is a list of more expressive words and phrases, more or less characteristic of the later chapters, and occurring either not at all or only once in the undisputed portions of Isaiah¹:—

(15) *all flesh*: xl. 5, 6, xlix. 26, lxvi. 16, 23, 24.

(16) *'ōnēm* (=strength): xl. 26, 29.

(17) *'epheš* (=nothing): xl. 17, xli. 12, 29, xlv. 6, 14, xlvi. 9, xlvii. 8, 10, lii. 4, liv. 15. In Isaiah only v. 8.

(18) *'iyyīm* (=coast-lands): xl. 15, xli. 1, 5, xlii. 4, 10, 12, 15, xlix. 1, li. 5, lix. 18, lx. 9, lxvi. 19. In Isaiah only the sing. *'iy*, in its proper restricted signification, xx. 6, xxiii. 2, 6.

(19) *ends* (or *end*) *of the earth*: xl. 28, xli. 5, 9, xlii. 10, xliii. 6, xlv. 22, xlviii. 20, xlix. 6, lii. 10, lxii. 11.

(20) *gā'al* (=redeem): verb and participle are used over 20 times.

(21) *bārā'* (=create): about sixteen times; in Isaiah only iv. 5, —a doubtful passage.

(22) *choose, chosen* (of Israel or the Servant of Jehovah): twelve times.

(23) *Lift up (your) eyes* &c.: xl. 26, xlix. 18, li. 6, lx. 4.

(24) *ḥēpḥeš* (=pleasure), liv. 12, lxii. 4: (=purpose), xlv. 28, xlvi. 10, xlviii. 14, liii. 10: (=business), lviii. 3, 13.

¹ This list and the next are for the most part abridged from the three given in Driver's *Isaiah*², pp. 194—199, which the reader should by all means consult. The dependence was inevitable; the object being to present but a few of the clearest cases, a more judicious selection than Driver's could not be made.

(25) *pā'ēr* (=deck) and *hithpā'ēr* (=deck oneself): xlv. 23, xlix. 3, lv. 5, lx. 7, 9, 13, 21, lxi. 3. In Isa. only x. 15.

(26) *break out* into singing: xlv. 23, xlix. 13, lii. 9, liv. 1, lv. 12.

(27) *hillāl* and *tēhillāh* (=praise, vb. and subst.), *hithhallāl* (=exult): xli. 16, xlii. 8, 10, 12, xliii. 21, xlv. 25, xlviii. 9, lx. 6, 18, lxi. 3, 11, lxii. 7, 9, lxiii. 7, lxiv. 11 [10].

(28) *hāshāh* (qal and hiph.=be silent): xlii. 14, lvii. 11, lxii. 1, 6, lxiv. 12, lxv. 6.

(29) *çe'ēçā'im* (=offspring): xlii. 5, xlv. 3, xlviii. 19, lxi. 9, lxv. 23. Isa. only xxii. 24.

(30) *çāmah* (=sprout): xlv. 4, xlv. 8, lv. 10, lviii. 8, lxi. 11. Note the unique metaphorical application to an event coming to pass, in xlii. 9, xliii. 19.

(31) *Holy City*: xlviii. 2, lii. 1 (cf. lxiv. 10).

(32) *rāçôn* (=favour): xlix. 8, lvi. 7, lviii. 5, lx. 7, 10, lxi. 2.

(33) *from the first* (*mērōsh*): xl. 21, xli. 4, 26, xlviii. 16.

(34) *lay to heart*: xlii. 25, xlvii. 7, lvii. 1, 11.

Still more suggestive is a list of Isaiah's characteristic expressions, not found at all in chs. xl.—lxvi. The following examples (from Driver) must suffice:—

(1) *The Lord, Jehovah of Hosts*: i. 24, iii. 1, x. 16, 33, xix. 4.

(2) *'elîlîm* (=nonentities, of idols): ii. 8, 18, 20, x. 11, xix. 1, 3, xxxi. 7.

(3) *mirmās* (=trampling): v. 5, vii. 25, x. 6, xxviii. 18.

(4) *glory* (of a nation): v. 13, viii. 7, x. 16, 18, xvi. 14, xvii. 3, 4; (of an individual), xxii. 18.

(5) *smear* (of the eyes): vi. 10, xxix. 9, xxxii. 3.

(6) *şikşēk* (=incite): ix. 11, xix. 2 (nowhere else).

(7) *shē'ār* (=remnant): vii. 3, x. 19, 20, 21, 22, xvi. 14, xvii. 3, xxviii. 5.

(8) *final and decisive work*: x. 23, xxviii. 22.

(9) the figure of the *scourge*: x. 26, xxviii. 15, 18.

(10) *flying sārāph*: xiv. 29, xxx. 6 (nowhere else).

(11) *kabbîr* (=numerous, mighty, &c.): xvi. 14, xvii. 12, xxviii. 2.

Only seven times in Job besides.

(12) *mēbūṣāh* (=treading down): xviii. 2, 7, xxii. 5 (nowhere else).

(13) *çābā'* (=to war): xxix. 7, 8, xxxi. 4 (uncommon).

(14) *šérem* (=streaming rain): xxviii. 2 *bis*, xxx. 30, xxxii. 2.

(15) *briers and thorns*: v. 6, vii. 23, 24, 25, ix. 18, x. 17. Except in xxvii. 4, xxxii. 13, neither word occurs elsewhere.

(16) *miz'ār* (=a little): x. 25, xvi. 14, xxix. 17.

It is impossible to pursue the subject further. The evidence of style is as conclusive as could be desired, and amply confirms the deduction to be naturally drawn from the historical setting of the prophecy and its leading conceptions. The resulting impression is so strong that probably few will hesitate to acquiesce in the statement that "if the great prophecy of Israel's redemption and glorification now included in the Book of Isaiah had come down to us as an independent and anonymous document, no reasonable doubt could have been entertained as to the time at which it was written. Internal evidence would be regarded as fixing its date with remarkable precision towards the close of the Babylonian Exile¹." ²

The only question that remains is whether all these considerations can fairly be held to be outweighed by the circumstance that the prophecy *does* form part of the book of Isaiah, or by the all but unbroken tradition in favour of the Isaianic authorship. That tradition is unquestionably very ancient. It is attested by Jesus the son of Sirach (ch. xlviii. 22—25)³, by several New

¹ Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*², p. 353.

² With regard to the *place* where the author wrote, little can be said except that it is most reasonably to be assumed that he lived in Babylonia. That was probably the only country where he could have had any considerable audience of exiled Israelites; and that he was actually in direct touch with an audience can hardly be doubted, in view of the eager and passionate pleadings in which the book abounds. Allusions to Babylonia are as numerous as could be expected (see xlv. 27, xlv. 1 f., 3, xlv. 1 f., xlvii. 8—15, &c.), and quite as specific as those to be found in Ezekiel, who lived there; although they are perhaps hardly definite enough to determine the matter absolutely by themselves. The view of Ewald and Bunsen, that the book was written in Egypt, rests on no solid grounds, and Duhm's arguments in favour of Phœnicia are equally unconvincing. The idea that it was composed in Judæa has a certain plausibility as far as some of the later chapters are concerned, but is wholly inconsistent with the allusions of chs. xl.—xlviii. It is, of course, *conceivable* that the author might have returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel in 536, and that parts of the prophecy might be subsequent to that event. (See Appendix, Note III.)

³ *Vv.* 24 f. "He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to

Testament writers (Matt. iii. 3 and parallels, viii. 17, xii. 17; Luke iv. 17; John i. 23; Acts viii. 28; Rom. x. 16, 20) and by Josephus (*Archæol.* xi. 1, § 2; cf. x. 2, § 2)¹; and is unhesitatingly accepted by subsequent Jewish and Christian opinion. Yet it may be doubted if all this weight of authority really adds any evidence whatever to the fact that the prophecy stands in the Canon under the name of Isaiah. It is not an unreasonable assumption that the belief that Isaiah is the author rested originally on nothing else than the canonical title of the book, and was simply transmitted without examination from one generation to another. This possibility would be admitted readily enough in the case of the secular writers that have been referred to. To many it may seem that the New Testament writers, in virtue of their inspiration, stand on a different footing. But this is surely to press the doctrine of inspiration to a dangerous extreme. In no single instance is it material to the purpose for which the quotation is made, whether the author be Isaiah or a prophet of the Exile; and to say that an inspired writer may not use the current language of his time in referring to a book of Scripture without imperilling the veracity of the author of Revelation, is a position to which no wise man would wish to be committed.

What weight, then, is to be assigned to the fact that the prophecy is included in the book of Isaiah? The view taken by critical scholars is the very simple one that the incorporation was the work of an editor of the prophetic literature,—a point, by the way, which seems to be imperfectly apprehended by those writers who so persistently impute to critics the imaginary crime of “sawing Isaiah asunder.” Critics do not profess to know who the editor was, or what were the precise motives by which he was guided; it is enough to know that the operation is perfectly conceivable, and that a variety of reasons might easily be suggested for it². Nor is it an isolated instance

pass at the last; and he comforted them that mourned in Zion. He shewed the things that should be to the end of time, and the hidden things or ever they came.” See Vol. i. p. lxxiii.

¹ See Note on ch. xlv. 28.

² Kirkpatrick (*Doctrine of the Prophets*², p. 363), suggests that “a partial explanation [of the position of the prophecy] may be found in

in the history of prophetic writings. In Jeremiah li. 64 we find a note (evidently the work of an editor), "thus far are the words of Jeremiah"; and it is practically certain that the book of Zechariah contains the work of three separate prophets. Whether, therefore, the editor supposed the prophecy to be a genuine work of Isaiah, or whether for some other reason he decided to add it to the collection of his prophecies, the fact that it stands there is far from being a conclusive proof that Isaiah is the author. And since a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, it cannot be held that even a tradition of 2,000 years is sufficient to invalidate the critical arguments for the late date of the prophecy.

It is but fair to notice another kind of external evidence to which considerable importance is attached by some scholars, viz., the alleged use by certain pre-exilic prophets of the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah. This is thought to be proved by a comparison of parallel passages, of which the clearest examples are: Jer. x. 1—16 with ch. xlv. 12—15, &c.; Jer. xxx. 10 f. (=Jer. xlv. 27 f.) with ch. xlviii. 1—6, &c.; Jer. xxxi. 12 with ch. lviii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 35 with ch. li. 15; Jer. xxxiii. 3 with ch. xlviii. 6; Jer. l. 2, 8 with xlv. 1, xlviii. 20; Nah. i. 15 with lii. 7; Nah. iii. 4, 5 with xlvii. 3, 9; Nah. iii. 7 with li. 19; Zeph. ii. 15 with xlvii. 8, 10. In some of these cases the resemblance is slight, and may be accidental, but in others it is so close as to create an irresistible impression of literary dependence, on one side or the other. In no instance, however, can it be pronounced with confidence on *which* side the priority lies, the supposition that the second Isaiah borrowed from his predecessors being, in itself, just as reasonable as that pre-exilic prophets borrowed from him. In three of the parallels there is perhaps a certain presumption that the Isaianic passage is the original; these are Jer. x. 1—16, xxx. 10 f., and Nah. i. 15; but each of these passages is suspected on independent grounds of being an

the form of ancient books. The prophecy was annexed to Isaiah i.—xxxix., in order to form a volume approximately equal to those of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets. If it was anonymous it would soon come to be ascribed to Isaiah."

interpolation in the pre-exilic book where it stands. In any event, the presumption is not strong enough to counterbalance any decided probability in the opposite direction. Moreover, the force of the argument from verbal parallelisms would seem to be neutralised by the fact that no pre-exilic writer betrays any knowledge that the end of the Babylonian Exile had been distinctly foretold by Isaiah the son of Amoz. It would be a very singular and unaccountable thing if the latter part of Isaiah had been studied by a succession of prophets with such care that its phrases passed into their style, while none of them ever suffers it to appear that he had assimilated the contents of the book. It cannot be too strongly insisted that the whole discussion is a balancing of probabilities, and it will generally be found that the argument from parallel passages can be used on either side to strengthen that conclusion which on other grounds seems most probable.

CHAPTER V.

UNITY OF THE PROPHECY.

THE most difficult of the current critical questions in regard to the second part of Isaiah are those concerning the unity or integrity of the volume. Whether the prophecy is the work of a single writer, whether it was composed wholly before the close of the Exile, or in part after the Return, whether the writer has adopted fragments from earlier prophecies into his own work, these are matters on which the utmost diversity of opinion exists among recent scholars. And although it is neither desirable nor possible in this place to enter fully into the discussion of them, there are two questions of such magnitude and importance that a few pages must be devoted to their consideration¹.

1. The first relates to the genuineness of the so-called "Servant-passages" (xlii. 1—4, xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, lii. 13—liii. 12).

¹ There are of course numerous passages supposed, with more or less reason, to be interpolated, but these have to be considered in detail.

Ewald, in 1868, was the first great critic who expressed the opinion that ch. lii. 13—liii. 12 was borrowed by the prophet from an earlier composition (which he assigned to the age of Manasseh); and similar views have been advocated with regard to this passage by several subsequent writers. The affinities of the four "Servant-passages" were first recognised by Duhm in 1875, and the tendency of recent writers has been to treat them as a distinct group. Thus the question raised, in its most general form, is whether these four passages form an integral part of the exilic prophecy of chs. xl. ff., or whether they are the work of another writer, who may have lived either before or after that date.

It may be remarked that so long as the negative theory is held in the form in which it was propounded by Ewald, the question has but a secondary interest for the interpreter. "The question he asks is not what may possibly have been the original meaning of ch. liii. but what is its meaning now as it stands an integral part of the magnificent production of which it is the crown¹." If it be admitted that the disputed passages passed through the mind of the exilic author, and were by himself incorporated in his work, it matters comparatively little whether he originally wrote them or drew them from an independent source; they form an essential element of his teaching, and for all practical purposes may be treated as if they were his own work. It is only when they are classed as real interpolations, inserted without the knowledge of the author and after his book was completed, that the issue becomes of serious consequence. This is the position assumed by some writers, notably by Duhm, who thinks that the fragments may have been inserted by an editor, almost at hap-hazard, where there chanced to be a convenient space in the manuscript; an almost incredible hypothesis, which, at least in this extreme form, is not likely to be sustained. Some who follow Duhm (Schian², Kosters³), have perceived that the first three passages cannot be lifted from their places without carrying some of the succeeding

¹ Davidson, *Expositor*, 2nd Series, Vol. vi. p. 87.

² *Die Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder*, 1895.

³ *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1896, pp. 583 ff.

verses with them, and find accordingly that the interpolations must be more extensive than Duhm supposed. But this kind of criticism is exceedingly hazardous when applied to a work like the second Isaiah, where one has only to read on far enough to obtain a new point of connexion with something that has gone before. For the rest, the present writer must be content to express his general agreement with the conclusion of Cheyne, which is that while it cannot be shewn that the "Servant-passages" have sprung immediately from the preceding context, "they have in general exercised such an influence on the following sections that they cannot well have been inserted by anyone but II. Isaiah himself¹"; and further that it is not "at all impossible that they may be the work of II. Isaiah himself²."

2. Another critical question of some importance arises in connexion with the later chapters of the prophecy. Certain peculiarities of these chapters (particularly lvi.—lix., lxiii.—lxvi.) have for a long time engaged the attention of critics. Their style differs considerably from that of the earlier part of the volume; their tone is much less hopeful and buoyant, they lay far greater stress on the externals of religion (e.g. Sabbath-observance and the Temple ritual), they appear to be addressed to a Jewish community possessing a certain measure of political independence, and the allusions to natural scenery indicate that this community was settled in Palestine. These circumstances conspire to render the literary unity of the second Isaiah very difficult of belief; and those who hold that the book is on the whole the work of a single author have usually sought to explain them by two assumptions: first, that the exilic author has

¹ *Introduction*, p. 307. In Cheyne's view, the latter statement is only partially true of ch. lii. 13—liii. 12, which he regards as an insertion made by the author *after* the completion of the work, and therefore without direct influence on the succeeding context.

² *Ibid.* p. 309. The suggestion is that they were composed by the prophet at an earlier period of his life. Even this concession does not seem to me necessary. If it be the practice of the writer "to take up one of the Servant-passages as a suggestive theme" for a fresh start in his argument, there can be no great difficulty in supposing that he wrote them for that purpose along with the rest of the prophecy.

embodied fragments of pre-exilic prophecies in his work, adapting them to his own purpose; and secondly, that some portions may have been written after the high hopes with which he started had been damped, and possibly after he had returned to Palestine. Of late years, however, and especially since the appearance of Duhm's commentary in 1892, the idea has gained favour in many quarters that the whole of the third division of the prophecy (chs. lvi.—lxvi.) is of post-exilic origin, and was written by one or more prophets living in Jerusalem about the time of Nehemiah.

It cannot be denied that this theory has much to recommend it. The condition of the people during the first century after the Restoration is very imperfectly known, but the state of things revealed by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah¹, and Malachi embraces several features which correspond to the allusions of chs. lvi.—lxvi. The following are some of the circumstances which are appealed to in support of the post-exilic authorship of this part of the prophecy:—(1) The existence of the Temple appears to be presupposed in ch. lvi. 7, lx. 7, lxii. 9, more clearly in lxv. 11, lxvi. 6. It is quite possible to interpret the first three references of a Temple yet unbuilt, but this suggestion cannot be so readily entertained with regard to the two remaining cases. If the impression that an actually existing Temple is referred to be correct, the date of the passages would be fixed as later than B.C. 515 (Ezra vi. 15, &c.). (2) Ch. lvi. 8 seems to imply that a partial gathering of exiled Israelites has taken place, and promises that others shall yet be gathered. None of the other allusions to a restoration of exiles (lx. 4, 8, lxvi. 20) contain anything inconsistent with this; they can all be naturally understood of the Dispersion that remained after the first return from Babylon. (3) The social conditions dealt with in the prophecy are in accordance with those which are known

¹ It must be remembered, however, that Haggai and Zechariah are separated from the time of Nehemiah by an interval of nearly 80 years (see Chronological Table, p. lxi). Any illustrations drawn from their writings are of value only in so far as they reveal a state of things likely to have persisted through that long space of time.

to have existed after the Exile. Oppression of the poor by the rich or of slaves by their masters (lviii. 3—6, 9, lix. 3 ff., 13 ff.) is attested by Neh. v. and Mal. iii. 5. The description of the leaders of the community as worthless, greedy and self-indulgent (lvi. 10—12) is illustrated by the conduct of the worldly-minded priests who sought their advantage in family alliances with their half-heathen neighbours (Ezra ix. 1, 2; Neh. xiii. 4, 28), or the hireling prophets who tried to undermine the influence of Nehemiah (Neh. vi. 10—14). There are also traces of that cleavage into two parties,—one strict, fearing Jehovah and trembling at His word, the other lax and indifferent to all religious interests—which the book of Malachi proves to have existed in the first century after the Restoration (see ch. lvii. 1, 15, 20, lix. 4—8, 18, lxx. 8, 13 ff., lxxi. 5; and comp. Mal. iii. 5, 15—18). These facts, taken together, seem to imply a date either earlier or later than the Exile, and the parallels in post-exilic writings go to shew that the latter alternative is at least as probable as the former. (4) There are repeated allusions in these chapters to a section of the population addicted to idolatrous practices of a very peculiar kind (lvii. 3—13, lxx. 1—7, 11 ff., lxxi. 3 ff., 17). It is an interesting suggestion of Duhm's that these passages refer to the mixed population (of Israelites, Ammonites, Arabians, &c.) which had settled in the land during the Exile, particularly the half-caste Samaritans, who had at first sought a share in the building of the Temple (Ezra iv. 1 ff.), but afterwards, on being repulsed, did their utmost to weaken the hands of the strictly religious party in Jerusalem. The persons spoken of are described as "brethren" of the God-fearing Jews (lxxi. 5) and at the same time as the most bitter enemies of the Temple-community (lvii. 4, lxxi. 5); they pride themselves on their "righteousness" (lvii. 12), although they have been unfaithful to Jehovah (lvii. 8) and "forgotten" His holy mountain (lxx. 11); the comparison of ch. lvii. 3 may refer to the hybrid origin of the Samaritans (but see the Notes). These things could not be said of pure heathen; they *might* no doubt be said of a section of the Israelites themselves, but perhaps their fittest application is to the community of whom it

is recorded that "they feared Jehovah and served their own gods" (2 Ki. xvii. 33). (5) The prophet gives utterance to a feeling which prevailed amongst the post-exilic Jews when he complains that the promised redemption is delayed, and finds the explanation of the delay in the moral condition of the people (ch. lix. 1—15). Such a feeling is never expressed in the earlier part of the book (with the doubtful exception of ch. xlviii. 17—19); and it is difficult to believe that it could have arisen in the interval between the appearing of the prophet and the close of the Exile. (6) In addition to all this, the theory of Duhamel is recommended by its comparative simplicity. It has the merit of applying a single explanation to a large number of congruous phenomena; and this is more than can be said for any tenable form of the theory that the whole material has passed through the hands of the principal author. The idea that a writer so original as the second Isaiah should have copied long passages from earlier prophets in order to convey his own message to his countrymen is not a natural one; and if the literary unity of the prophecy is only to be saved by such expedients as that, it is a question whether the problem is not really simplified by ascribing the later chapters to an independent author, addressing a different audience.

These arguments are, of course, not decisive, and may not be such as to overcome the natural reluctance to carry the disintegration of the prophetic books further than can be proved absolutely necessary. And there are some considerations on the other side which must not be overlooked. (1) Chs. lx.—lxii. so closely resemble the work of the second Isaiah that it may seem hardly reasonable to assign them to a different author. The question may fairly be raised whether the resemblance is more than superficial, and whether a close examination of chs. lx.—lxii. does not shew that the existence of the Temple and the Jewish State is there presupposed. Still the presumption that this is the case can scarcely be said to be much stronger than in the similar descriptions of chs. xlix.—liv., which only a few critics have supposed to be written in Palestine. (2) A large number of coincidences, both of thought and expression, are to be found

distributed over the whole prophecy, and form an important link of connexion between the two parts. Compare, for example, ch. lvi. 1 with xlv. 13; ch. lvii. 14, lxii. 10 with xlviii. 20, lii. 11, 12; lviii. 12, lxi. 4 with xlix. 8; lix. 16, lxiii. 5 with l. 2; lix. 17 with xlii. 13; lix. 21 with xlv. 3; lx. 14, 16, lxvi. 11 with xlix. 23; lxi. 1—3 with the Servant-passages; lxi. 2 with xlix. 8; lxi. 11 with xlv. 8; lxii. 11 with xl. 10; lxv. 17, lxvi. 22 with li. 6; lxvi. 8 with liv. 1;—a list which might be extended. It is difficult to determine whether such affinities indicate unity of authorship or only the influence of one author on another, or, in some instances, direct quotation of the earlier by the later. (3) Although there is no unambiguous declaration that the release from Babylon is still future, yet the two passages lvii. 14 and lxii. 10 ff. so much resemble ch. xl. 3, xlviii. 20, and lii. 11 f. as to suggest that they refer to that event. Duhm thinks that in these cases (as in others) the post-exilic writer has adopted the idea from his predecessor, but applied it figuratively, to the removal of spiritual obstacles to the redemption of Israel, a suggestion which may strike some minds as over-subtle. (4) The change in the prophet's attitude (as compared with chs. xl.—lv.) might be fully explained if we knew anything at all of the circumstances of the Jews in Babylon towards the close of the Exile. It is indeed conceivable that many features of their social and religious condition might furnish an even more satisfying explanation of the allusions in the prophecy than the parallels drawn from the meagre post-exilic records. Thus, the earlier part of the book contains indications of a division of parties, and it is not unlikely that the cleavage might have been accentuated as the deliverance drew near. Still, there are not many scholars who hold that *all* the phenomena of the prophecy can be thus accounted for; some parts are generally allowed to be so manifestly Palestinian in their colouring that, if not post-exilic, they must be based on pre-exilic documents. (5) The supposed references to the Samaritans, while instructive and plausible up to a certain point, yet lack the definiteness which was to have been expected and which is necessary to produce complete conviction. Moreover, they differ in some important

particulars from what is otherwise known of that community and its relations with the Jews (see esp. on lxxv. 2)¹.

Whatever view be adopted regarding the literary integrity of the prophecy, there is a deeper unity in it which is not impaired by any critical theory of its authorship. If chs. lvi.—lxvi. were not written by the same author as chs. xl.—lv. they were at least written by one who was imbued with the teaching of his predecessor, and consciously built on the foundations which he had laid. The brilliant promises of the second Isaiah had received but a meagre fulfilment in the return of the first colony of exiled Jews to Palestine; and the century that followed was in large measure a period of disenchantment, when “the prophecies, being read literally, proved a heritage of woe².” The existing state of things was one in which believing minds found it impossible to acquiesce. The restoration of the Jewish state might be a solid gain to the cause of religion, but it did not realise the glorious hopes that had been cherished with regard to it. It had not ushered in the everlasting salvation of which the prophet had spoken; it had not even brought great prosperity to Israel. The glory of the Lord had not been revealed so that all flesh could see it, and there were no signs of any movement of the Gentile world towards the true religion. Hence the great question that exercised the minds of devout Jews of this period was, Why does the Lord delay His coming? What hinders the complete fulfilment of His word? We know of some prophets who were raised up in the post-exilic age to answer that question, and to keep alive the faith in the ultimate triumph of Jehovah’s kingdom. And if it should prove that one prophet (or even more than one) has devoted himself to supplementing the work of the second Isaiah by presenting his ideals in fresh forms suited to the altered circumstances of the time, there is certainly nothing in that view which will cause disquietude to any unprejudiced student of Revelation, while there may be much to throw light on an interesting, though very obscure, portion of sacred history.

¹ See further, Appendix, Note III.

² Davidson, *The Exile and the Restoration*, p. 86.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

B.C.	
604.	Battle of Carchemish.
	NEBUCHADNEZZAR, King of Babylon.
597.	First deportation of Jewish Captives to Babylonia, with Jehoiachin.
586.	Destruction of Jerusalem, and second deportation of Jews, with Zedekiah.
561.	EVIL-MERODACH succeeds Nebuchadnezzar.
559.	NERIGLISSAR.
555.	NABONIDUS.
549.	CYRUS conquers Media.
540.	Defeats Croesus and captures Sardis.
538.	Capture of Babylon.
	Return of exiles under Zerubbabel.
529.	CAMBYSES.
521.	DARIUS HYSTASPIS.
520.	Haggai.
520—518.	Zechariah.
520—516.	Building of the Second Temple.
490.	Battle of Marathon.
485.	XERXES.
480.	Battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis.
464.	ARTAXERXES I. (Longimanus).
458.	Return of exiles under Ezra.
	Malachi (?).
445.	Nehemiah appointed Governor of Judæa.
444.	Introduction of the Law.
432.	Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH.

CH. XL. 1—11. THE PROLOGUE.

THIS first proclamation of glad tidings to Zion (see ch. xli. 27) is a passage of singular beauty, breathing the spirit of new-born hope and enthusiasm with which the prophet enters on his work. The announcement of a miraculous restoration of the exiles to their own land is the central theme of his prophecy, and the point around which all the ideas of the book crystallize. As yet the historical fact is but dimly outlined, the writer's mind being occupied with its ideal significance as a revelation of the glory and the gracious character of Jehovah (*vv.* 5, 10*f.*). His state of mind borders on ecstasy; his ears are filled with the music of heavenly voices telling him that the night is far spent and the day is at hand; and although his home is with the exiles in Babylon, his gaze is fixed throughout on Jerusalem and the great Divine event which is the consummation of Israel's redemption.—The prologue consists of two parts:

i. *vv.* 1, 2.—Proclamation of forgiveness and promise of deliverance to the exiled nation.

ii. *vv.* 3—11. An imaginative description of the process by which the promise is to be fulfilled,—Jehovah's return with His people to their ancient abode. This second division contains three sections:—

(1) *vv.* 3—5. A voice is heard calling on unseen agencies to prepare a way for Jehovah through the desert. The idea expressed is that already the spiritual and supernatural forces are in motion which will bring about the return of the captives and a revelation of the Divine glory to all the world.

(2) *vv.* 6—8. A second voice calls on the prophet to proclaim the fundamental truth on which the realisation of his hope depends,—the perishableness of all human power, and the enduring stability of the word of the Lord.

(3) *vv.* 9—11. The prophet himself now takes up the strain; he summons a company of ideal messengers to announce to Zion and the cities of Judah the advent of Jehovah with His ransomed people.

40 COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto
 her,
 That her warfare is accomplished,
 That her iniquity is pardoned:

1, 2. The term of Jerusalem's servitude is accomplished; she has suffered the full penalty of her transgressions.

Comfort ye] The repetition of an emphatic opening word is characteristic of the writer's style; cf. ch. xlii. 11, 25, xlviii. 11, 15, li. 9, 12, 17, lii. 1, 11 etc. (see Introd. p. xlv). It is rather idle to enquire who are the persons addressed; they might no doubt be prophets (as the clause is paraphrased by the Targ.) or the prophetically minded among the people, but certainly not the priests, as is suggested by the Sept. addition of *lepeis* at the beginning of v. 2.

saith your God] The verb differs in tense from the usual prophetic formula, being an impf. either of continued or of incipient action (see Introd. p. xlvii, and Driver, *Tenses*, § 33 (a) Obs.). To translate it by a future and take this as a proof that the words were written by Isaiah 150 years before is quite unwarranted.

2. *speak ye comfortably to*] Lit. "speak to the heart of." To "speak to one's own heart" is to whisper or meditate (1 Sam. i. 13); to speak to the heart of another is to soothe, or persuade, or comfort. For the meaning of the phrase, see Gen. xxxiv. 3; Jud. xix. 3; 2 Sam. xix. 7; Hos. ii. 14; and esp. Gen. i. 21; and Ruth ii. 13, where it is parallel to "comfort" as here.

Jerusalem] an ideal representation of the people, like Zion in v. 9; cf. xlix. 14 ff., li. 16 f., lii. 1 ff. 7 ff. There are two standing personifications of Israel in this prophecy, the other being the "Servant of the Lord." These, however, are not interchangeable; Zion represents the nation on its receptive side; she is the mother of the people, the recipient of the blessings of salvation; while the Servant represents the historic Israel, past, present and future, in its religious aspect, with a Divine mission to fulfil for humanity. That there was an actual population in the ruined city during the Exile is of course not to be inferred from this figure.

her warfare is accomplished] The word for "warfare" is that rendered "appointed time" in A.V. of Job vii. 1, xiv. 14. It means properly a term of military service; then figuratively any period of irksome toil or endurance which a man longs to reach the end of; such as life itself had become to Job. The reference here is of course to the Exile. Render: *time of service* (R.V. marg.).

her iniquity (better, her guilt) is pardoned] This expression for pardon is rare. The verb commonly means "to be pleased with"; in a few places it means (as here) "to pay off a debt to the satisfaction of the creditor" (see Lev. xxvi. 34, 41, 43, and cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). For the idea see ch. i. 1.

for she hath received...double] i.e. "double penalty for her sins" (cf. Jer. xvi. 18, xvii. 18; Rev. xviii. 6), not "(she shall receive) double

For she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, 3
Prepare ye the way of the LORD,
Make straight in the desert a highway for our
God.

Every valley shall be exalted, 4
And every mountain and hill shall be made low:
And the crooked shall be made straight,

favour for her previous punishment." It is difficult to say whether the clause is subordinate to the two preceding (as in A.V.) or co-ordinate with them, as in R.V. (reading *that* instead of *for*). The idea that Jerusalem's punishment had been greater than her sin required is not to be pressed theologically; but the idea that Jehovah's penal purpose can be satisfied by a temporary chastisement is of the essence of the O.T. notion of forgiveness. It must be remembered, however, that in the view of this prophet, Israel includes the Servant of Jehovah, and the unmerited sufferings of the Servant form the atoning element in the punishment which has fallen on the nation as a whole (ch. liii.).

3—5. The prophet hears a voice calling on angelic powers to prepare the way of the Lord. It is doubtful whether Duhm is right in regarding this as a case of true prophetic "audition"; it is more naturally understood as a flight of poetic imagination.

3. *The voice of him that crieth*] The word "voice" here and often has the force of an interjection; render accordingly: **Hark! one crying.** The voice is not that of God (on account of the following "our God"), neither is it a human voice; it comes from one of the angelic ministers of Jehovah and is addressed to beings of the same order. The words *in the wilderness* should be joined with *prepare ye* etc., in accordance with the accents (R.V.). A.V. agrees with LXX. and Vulg. and the N.T. citations (Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4); but sense and parallelism alike shew that the Heb. accentuation is right.

Prepare] strictly "clear of obstacles" (see Gen. xxiv. 31; Lev. xiv. 36; Ps. lxxx. 9; cf. ch. lvii. 14, lxii. 10; Mal. iii. 1). The figure is taken from the well-known Eastern practice of repairing the roads for a royal journey. It may be difficult to say how far the representation is ideal. Allusions to the march through the desert are too constant a feature of the prophecy (ch. xl. 10 f., xli. 18 f., xlii. 16, xliii. 19 f., xlviii. 21, xlix. 9 ff., lv. 12 f.) to be treated as merely figurative; the prophet seems to have expected the deliverance to issue in a triumphal progress of Jehovah with His people through the desert between Babylonia and Palestine, after the analogy of the exodus from Egypt. But all such passages probably look beyond the material fulfilment and include the removal of political and other hindrances to the restoration of Israel.

4. *and the crooked...plain*] More literally: **and the uneven shall**

- And the rough places plain:
 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
 And all flesh shall see *it* together:
 For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.
 6 The voice said, Cry.
 And he said, What shall I cry?
 All flesh *is* grass,
 And all the goodness thereof *is* as the flower
 of the field:
 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:
 Because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it:

become a plain, and the rugged places a valley. *rough places* is a word of somewhat uncertain sense, which does not occur elsewhere. *straight* and *plain* are nouns in the original.

5. In place of *it together* LXX. has "the salvation of God," borrowing apparently from ch. lii. 10. See Luke iii. 6.

for the mouth...it] This prophetic formula is nowhere else used by second Isaiah. The whole verse is deleted as a gloss by Duhamel and Cheyne, but on grounds which seem insufficient.

6—8. The second voice proclaims the double truth: all earthly might is transitory, the word of God is eternal. Logically the section interrupts the connexion between v. 5 and v. 9, and is itself a prelude to vv. 12 ff. But to transpose vv. 6—8 and 9—11, as is done by the two commentators just named, is hardly advisable; logical sequence is not the principle on which the book is arranged.

6. *The voice said, Cry*] Render (as before) **Hark! one saying, Cry.** "Cry" here evidently means "prophesy" as in v. 2, ch. xlv. 7, lxi. 1 f.; Jer. vii. 27. Hence the response, **and one said** (R.V.) will naturally come from a prophet, the call being from the same quarter as in v. 3. There is no need to suppose that an ideal person is meant, the most probable interpretation is that it is the prophet himself who replies to the voice. It is better, therefore, to change the vowels and read with LXX. and Vulg. "and I said"; in spite of the fact that the author usually keeps his own personality in the background. The other reading does not sufficiently express the distinction between the call and the answer; hence A.V. seems to refer both to the same speaker.

all flesh is grass] The answer to the question, "What shall I cry?" Cf. ch. xxxvii. 27; Job viii. 12, xiv. 2; Ps. xxxvii. 2, ciii. 15, and esp. Ps. xc. 5 f.

goodliness] The Heb. word is nowhere else used in this sense. It signifies "lovingkindness" or "grace" (of God to men). The transition from the one meaning to the other is illustrated by the Greek χάρις, and there is no reason to suspect the text.

7. *the spirit of the LORD*] Better as R.V. **the breath of the LORD**, i.e. the wind (Ps. ciii. 16), specially the scorching east-wind (Hos. xiii. 15) or Sirocco, which blows chiefly in the spring, blighting the fresh vegetation (see Smith, *Hist. Geog. of Palestine*, pp. 67 ff.).

Surely the people *is* grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:

8

But the word of our God shall stand for ever.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into
the high mountain;

O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy
voice with strength;

Lift *it* up, be not afraid;

Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.

surely the people is grass] "The people," used absolutely, must apparently mean "humanity"; although there are no strict parallels to this sense. To understand it of Israel is opposed to the prophet's general teaching and misrepresents his meaning here. It is not Israel, but the enemies of Israel, whose perishableness he is concerned to assert. The words at best are a flat repetition of *v.* 6 and should probably be removed as a marginal gloss. The LXX., indeed, omits all from *because* in *v.* 7 to *fadeth* in *v.* 8: but this proves nothing, as it is evidently an oversight caused by the homœoteleuton. The resumption of the leading thought is a very effective introduction to the contrasted idea in the end of *v.* 8.

8. *the word of our God*] is the word spoken by the prophets to Israel, the announcement of Jehovah's immutable purpose in the world; this is the one permanent factor in human history. It is a mistake to limit the reference to the word of promise just declared by the prophet; the statement is general, although the implied argument is that as the threatening predictions of earlier prophets have been fulfilled, so this new word of comfort shall stand, because it proceeds from the same God, who can dissolve the mightiest combinations of human power (*v.* 23).

9—11. The prophet announces the triumphal approach of Jehovah to Zion.

O Zion...tidings] R.V. has **O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion.** Either translation is grammatically admissible; but the second is to be preferred, (1) because of the analogous passages xli. 27 and lii. 7, and (2) because Zion always in this prophecy represents the community as the passive recipient of salvation. The other rendering might seem to be recommended by the apparent distinction between Jerusalem and *the cities of Judah*, but this is probably not intended; Zion itself is included among the cities of Judah. The verb employed (*mēbasséréth*) is the Hebrew basis (through the LXX.) of the N.T. *εὐαγγελίζειν*; the fem. partic. is collective, denoting an ideal band of messengers (less probably the company of prophets). These Evangelists are bidden to "go up to a high mountain" to see from afar the coming of Jehovah, then to "lift up their voice without fear" (of being put to shame) and proclaim the glad tidings.

- 10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong *hand*,
 And his arm *shall* rule for him :
 Behold, his reward *is* with him,
 And his work before him.
- 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd :
 He shall gather the lambs with his arm,
 And carry *them* in his bosom,
And shall gently lead those that are with young.

10, 11. These words are spoken by the prophet in his own person.

10. *with strong hand*] R.V. as a **mighty one**; lit., "in (the capacity of) a strong one" (*Bêth essentiae*). The chief ancient versions vocalised the word as an abstract noun *bêhōzeq* ("with strength"), which yields an even better sense. *and his arm shall rule*] or **His arm ruling**;—the "arm," the symbol of strength.

For *work* render **recompence** (as R.V.) (see Lev. xix. 13). The idea is somewhat uncertain. It might mean, (1) the reward (lit. "hire") which Jehovah has *earned* by His victory over the Chaldeans, in which case the redeemed exiles themselves are the reward, which He brings with Him through the desert (v. 11). Or (2) it may refer to the reward which Jehovah is prepared to *bestow* on His people,—the blessings of His salvation. The last is perhaps the better sense, and is supported by the similar passage, ch. lxii. 11.

11. Jehovah as the Good Shepherd: an ideal picture of the homeward journey of the exiles, hardly of the permanent relations of Jehovah to His people in the final dispensation. The same image is used of the Restoration in Jer. xxiii. 1 ff., xxxi. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 11 ff.; Isa. xlix. 9; cf. lxiii. 11.

those that are with young] Render, with R.V., **those that give suck**. cf. Gen. xxxiii. 13.

CH. XL. 12—31. JEHOVAH, GOD OF ISRAEL, THE INCOMPARABLE, is the title suggested by Dr Davidson¹ for this great passage. It is a meditation or homily on the immeasurable greatness and power and wisdom of Jehovah, the Creator, as displayed in the works of nature and in the government of the world; an expansion of the idea of vv. 6—8. The argument from Creation is handled with a boldness of conception and freedom of imagination to which there is nothing equal in the earlier literature, and the frequent appeal to it on the part of this prophet may be held to mark a distinct advance in Israel's consciousness of God, coinciding generally with the period of the Exile. The practical aim which the writer has in view appears from vv. 27 ff.; it is to counteract the unbelief and despondency of his fellow-countrymen and to inspire them with some true sense of the infinitude of Jehovah,

¹ *Expositor*, Second Series, Vol. VII. p. 96.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his ¹²
hand,
And meted out heaven with the span,

their own God, who has addressed to them the consolations of *vv.* 1—11. The passage may be divided as follows:—

i. The argument, *vv.* 12—26.

(1) *vv.* 12—17. The greatness of Jehovah is illustrated by the magnitude of His operations as Creator (*v.* 12), by the perfection and self-sufficiency of His knowledge (*vv.* 13, 14), and by the insignificance in comparison with Him of all that exists (*vv.* 15—17).

(2) *vv.* 18—20. The thought of the transcendent greatness of Jehovah “suggests the idol, which also bears the name of God.... The magnitude of the true God suggests the littleness of the idol-god. *He* is incomparable; *it* is by no means so. Its genesis and manufacture are known. It is a cast metal, gilt article, upheld with chains, lest it should totter and tumble to the ground. Or it is a hard-wood tree fashioned into a block by a cunning workman¹.” This is the first of several sarcastic passages in which the processes of an idol factory are minutely described: xli. 6, 7, xliv. 9—20, xlv. 6—8.

(3) *vv.* 21—26. The thought of *vv.* 12—17 is now resumed and completed. The intelligent contemplation of nature (*vv.* 21 f.) or of history (*vv.* 23 f.) is enough to dispel the glamour of idolatry, and force the mind back on the Incomparableness of Him who is the Creator and Ruler of the world (*v.* 25 f.).

ii. The application, *vv.* 27—31. If such be the God of Israel, how can the exiles think that He is either unobservant of their fate or indifferent to it? Their God is an everlasting God; His strength is unfailing, His understanding unsearchable; and they who wait on Him shall find in Him an inexhaustible source of life and energy.

12—14. The argument for the infinitude of God opens with a series of rhetorical questions, not needing to be answered, but intended to raise the thoughts of despondent Israelites to the contemplation of the true nature of the God they worshipped. For a different purpose, namely, to humble the pride of human reason, the Almighty Himself addresses a similar series of interrogations to Job (xxxviii. 4 ff.).

12. Who can vie with Jehovah *in power*? The point of these questions lies in the smallness of the measures figured as being used by Jehovah in creating the universe,—the hollow of the hand, the span, etc. Logically, the questions are not quite on the same line as those in *vv.* 13 f. There the answer required is a simple negative: “No one”; here the meaning is, “What sort of Being must He be who actually measured” etc.

meted out] Lit. “weighed out” (as Job xxviii. 25); see on “directed,” (*v.* 13). The word for *comprehended* has in New Hebr. and Aram. the sense of “measure” and is probably so used here,—the only instance in the O.T.

¹ Davidson, *Ibid.* p. xox.

And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,
And weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance?

13 Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD,
Or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

14 With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him,
And taught him in the path of judgment,

a measure] means "a third part," a tierce, but obviously a small measure, probably a third of an ephah.

scales and *balance* might be better transposed; the first word denotes probably a "steelyard," the second the ordinary pair of scales.

The conception of the universe as measured out by its Creator appears to include two things. There is first the idea of order, adjustment and proportion in Nature, suggesting intelligence at work in the making of the world. But the more important thought is that of the infinite power which has carried through these vast operations as easily as man handles his smallest instruments of precision. The passage is not a demonstration of the existence of God, but assuming that He exists and is the Creator of all things, the prophet seeks to convey to his readers some impression of His Omnipotence, which is so conspicuously displayed in the accurate determination of the great masses and expanses of the material world.

13. From the *power* of Jehovah, the writer passes to expatiate on His perfect and self-sufficing *wisdom*.

Who hath directed] The verb is the same as "meted out" in the previous verse, and the transition from the literal to the metaphorical use is somewhat uncertain. From the idea of "weighing out," according to a fixed scale we get the notion of "regulating" or "determining"; cf. Ez. xviii. 25 (and pars.) "the way of Jehovah is not weighed out," regulated, i.e. is arbitrary. Or, on the other hand, the meaning might be "rightly estimated," "searched out" (as Prov. xvi. 2, xxi. 2). The first sense suits the context best; whether we render "direct" or "regulate" or "determine." LXX. probably read a different word; its *τίς ἐγνώ τοῦν Κυρίου* is verbally cited in 1 Cor. ii. 16.

the spirit of the LORD] denotes here the organ of the Divine intelligence (see 1 Cor. ii. 11). This is more likely than that the spirit is personified and then endowed with intelligence. The idea, however, does not appear to be found elsewhere in the O.T. The Spirit of God is ordinarily mentioned as the life-giving principle emanating from Jehovah, which pervades and sustains the world, and endows select men with extraordinary powers and virtues.

or being...him] Better, perhaps: **and was the man of His counsel who taught Him.** "His" and "Him" refer of course to Jehovah, not the Spirit.

14. *and who instructed*] Or, **so that he instructed.**

path of judgment] **path of right** (*mishpāt*). See ch. xxviii. 26, where the word means orderly procedure; here the reference is to the order

And taught him knowledge,
 And shewed to him the way of understanding?
 Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, 15
 And are counted as the small dust of the balance :
 Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.
 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, 16
 Nor the beasts thereof sufficient *for* a burnt offering.
 All nations before him *are* as nothing; 17
 And they are counted to him less than nothing, and
 vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? 18
 Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

of nature, or else the transition is already made from creation to providence (v. 15).

way of understanding] Or, *way of insight*. The intermediate clause *and taught him knowledge* is omitted by the LXX., and since it disturbs the parallelism, and repeats the verb just used, it may be a gloss.

15—17. The insignificance of collective humanity before Jehovah. The meditation passes from Nature to History, with the same design of encouraging those who doubted Jehovah's power to save.

a drop of a bucket] Rather: *a drop from the bucket*; which falls away without appreciably lessening the weight.

the small dust &c.] which does not turn the scale.

the isles] a characteristic word of the second half of Isaiah, occurring 12 times (see Introd. p. xlviii). In the general usage of O.T. it denotes the islands and coastlands of the Mediterranean (comp. the use of the singular by Isaiah in ch. xx. 6). Etymologically it probably means simply "habitable lands"; and this prophet uses it with great laxity, hardly distinguishing it from "lands" (see esp. ch. xlii. 15).

as a very little thing] "a grain of powder," used of the manna, Ex. xvi. 14.

16. So infinitely great is Jehovah that the forests of Lebanon would not yield fuel enough, nor its wild animals victims enough, for a holocaust worthy of Him.

17. *less than nothing*] Better: *of nought*; "belonging to the category of nothingness" (Cheyne).

vanity] The Hebr. is *tôhû*, a word which means primarily "a waste," and is applied in Gen. i. 2 to the primeval chaos (A.V. "without form"). See on ch. xxix. 21, xxxiv. 11. Here and in many other cases it is a synonym for nonentity.

18—20. "To whom will ye liken God?" This question introduces the second distinct theme of the argument, the folly of idolatry. Although the prophet has in his mind the difficulties of Jews impressed by the fascinations of idolatry, his words are addressed not to them directly, but to men in general. The error he exposes is not the

- 19 The workman melteth a graven image,
And the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold,
And casteth silver chains.
- 20 He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation
chooseth a tree *that* will not rot;

worshipping of Jehovah by images, but the universal error of thinking that the Deity (*ʿēl*) can be represented by the works of human hands. His point of view is that of Paul's speech to the Athenians: "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and device of man" (Acts xvii. 29). In order to see how absurd this is, one has but to observe how the images are manufactured; and the various processes are described with an unmistakeable irony. After v. 19 Duhm and Cheyne (following out a hint of Lagarde's) insert vv. 6 and 7 of the next chapter. The description would then fall into two unequal parts; first, the construction of a metal idol (v. 19, xli. 6, 7), and second, that of a wooden idol (v. 20); each ending naturally with the fastening of the image to its pedestal.

19. *melteth a graven image*] R.V. The graven image, a workman melted it. The word *pēsel* means strictly a "graven image," but is used several times as here of an image in general.

overlayeth it with gold] The idol consists of a core of brass which is cast by the "workman," and then handed over to the goldsmith to be covered with a plating of gold (see ch. xxx. 22).

and casteth silver chains] A perplexing clause, which the LXX. omits. The word rendered "casteth" is the same as that for "goldsmith" (strictly "assayer"), the participle being translated by a finite verb. But such a construction is incorrect: and besides the *verb* is never used except in the sense of "test" or "purify." It is only when the partic. has become a noun that it assumes the general sense of worker in metal. Hence Dillmann proposes to render "and with silver chains a smelter (sc. covers it)." But this is exceedingly harsh. The word for "chains" is also of doubtful meaning, and altogether the clause must be pronounced hopelessly obscure.

20. *He that is so...oblation*] R.V. He that is too impoverished for such an oblation (lit. impoverished with respect to an oblation). If the text be sound this seems the only possible interpretation, although the whole sense turns on the word "such" which is in no way expressed. Moreover the technical *ʿērāmāh* (temple-oblation) has no appropriateness here. The LXX. appear to have read *tēmānāh* (ὀμολομα), which looks more promising, but leaves the word for "impoverished" (יִדְדִּי) more unintelligible than ever. Jerome gives the information that *mēšukkān* is a durable kind of wood (see Vulg. "lignum imputribile"); and this has led some to connect it with an Assyrian word, *musukkānu* (= palm-tree). The Targ. gives "he cutteth down a laurel-tree," apparently taking יִדְדִּי as a denominative from יִדְדִּי (=knife). This shews at least that there was no reliable Jewish tradition as to the meaning of the word. Duhm, combining the hints of the Targ. and the LXX., obtains a

He seeketh unto him a cunning workman
To prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved.

Have ye not known? have ye not heard?
Hath it not been told you from the beginning?
Have ye not understood *from* the foundations of the
earth?

21

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,
And the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers;
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

22

reading which is as good as any that can be suggested: "He who carves an image." The transition from the metal to the wooden idol is thus more distinctly expressed.

a tree that will not rot] Such as those named in ch. xlv. 14. A weak parody of Eternity!

that shall not be moved] **that will not totter.** See 1 Sam. v. 3, 4; cf. Wisd. Sol. xiii. 15 f.

21. The next section (21—26) again commences with a series of questions driving home the force of the whole previous argument. The appeal seems to be still to mankind at large.

have ye not heard? Rather: **Do ye not know? Do ye not hear?** The two avenues by which the knowledge of God reaches the mind are reflexion on the facts of nature and history, and external testimony.

told you from the beginning) i.e. from the beginning of the world, by an unbroken tradition.

from the foundations] The preposition "from" might easily have been accidentally omitted in the Heb. The LXX., indeed, and other Versions take "foundations" as obj. to "understood." The parallelism seems to require the phrase to be taken in a temporal sense (cf. Rom. i. 20); but there is no other case where the word has the sense of *fundatio* (properly, = *fundamenta*).

22, 23. The majesty of the God who reveals Himself in Creation and Providence is described in interjectional participial clauses, the force of which should not be blunted by the superfluous "It is" of E.V.

upon (rather: **above**, R.V. marg.) *the circle of the earth*] i.e. the horizon, where earth and heaven meet (see Prov. viii. 27), "at the confines of light and darkness" (Job xxvi. 10). The earth with its surrounding ocean is conceived as a flat disc, on which the arch of heaven comes down. The rendering "on the vault of the earth" (see Job xxii. 14, "vault of heaven," the same word) is possible, though not so good.

and (so that) the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers] Comp. for the expression Num. xiii. 33, and for the thought Ps. cxiii. 5 f.

as a curtain] **like gauze** (lit. fine cloth).

a tent to dwell in] i.e. simply "a habitable tent."

- 23 That bringeth the princes to nothing;
He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.
- 24 Yea, they shall not be planted;
Yea, they shall not be sown:
Yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth:
And he shall also blow upon them, and they shall
wither,
And the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.
- 25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?
saith the Holy One.
- 26 Lift up your eyes on high,
And behold who hath created these *things*,
That bringeth out their host by number:

23, 24. The majesty of God displayed in Providence.
[*princes*] **dignitaries** (a poetic word), "potent, grave and reverend signiors." *as vanity*] "as nothingness," lit. "chaos"; see on v. 17.
For *he maketh*, render **who maketh**.

24. *Yea, they shall not be...*] Render: Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock struck root in the earth, when he bloweth etc. (see R.V. marg.).
their stock] The same word as "stem" in ch. xi. 1, but in a different sense. See the note there.

25, 26 form the peroration of a passage of striking elevation. The writer makes a final appeal to the imagination of his audience by pointing to the nightly pageant of the starry hosts mustered at the command of Him who is Jehovah of Hosts.

25. *To whom then*] Exactly as in v. 18, and following a similar idea.
or shall I be equal?] Or, as R.V., "that I should be equal to him?"
the Holy One] *Qādōsh*, without the art., almost like a proper name. So Job vi. 10; Hab. iii. 3, and perhaps Ps. xxii. 3.

26. *and behold who hath created*] Better as R.V. marg.: **and see: who hath created these?** The word "create" occurs fifteen times in ch. xl.—lv. and five times in the chapters which follow; perhaps not more than nine times in the whole of the *earlier* literature. No other language possesses a word so exclusively appropriated to the Divine activity. Although it may not express the metaphysical idea of creation *ex nihilo*, it certainly denotes the effortless production, by a bare volition, which is the manner of God's working. Its frequent use in these chapters is significant not only of the writer's theology, but of the great movement of religious thought in Israel about the time of the Captivity. See *Introd.* pp. xliv, xlviii.

For *these things* render simply **these**, i.e. "these (stars) yonder" which you see when you lift your eyes on high. The stars are likened to a great army, a host of living, intelligent beings, which every night Jehovah marshals and leads across the sky.

that bringeth out] a participial clause like those of vv. 22 f.

He calleth them all by names
By the greatness of *his* might, for that *he is* strong in
power;
Not one faileth.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, 27
My way is hid from the LORD,
And my judgment is passed over from my God?
Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, 28
That the everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Fainteth not, neither is weary?
There is no searching of his understanding.
He giveth power to the faint; 29

he calleth...names] Better: calling them all by name, i.e. not
“bestowing names on them,” but calling each forth by his name. Cf.
Ps. cxlvii. 4, 5.

by the greatness...faileth] Render as a single sentence: **From Him**
who is great in might and strong in power not one is missing; none
dares to leave its post vacant when it hears the summons of the Almighty.
A slight change of pointing (*mêrah* for *mêrôb*) seems necessary to make
the epithet “great in might” correspond with “strong in power.” For
the latter cf. Job ix. 4.

27—31. The prophet now turns to his own people, drawing the
lesson of hope and encouragement which lies in the true doctrine of
God. Jehovah, whom Israel still calls “my God” (v. 27), is eternal
and unchangeable, of infinite power and discernment (28), and the
source of strength to those who have none in themselves (29) if only
they will wait on Him in faith (31).

27. *My way*] i.e. my circumstances, my lot (Ps. xxxvii. 5). Israel
feels that its hard lot is overlooked or ignored by Jehovah; far harder
is the complaint of Job (iii. 23) that God Himself has hidden his way,
setting a hedge across it.

my judgment...God] **my right passes from my God**,—escapes His
notice. In all its consciousness of guilt before God, the nation retained
the consciousness of having “right” on its side against its oppressors.
(See Appendix, Note II.).

28. *that the everlasting God, the LORD*] Better: **An everlasting God**
is Jehovah. *He fainteth not*] a new sentence.

there is no searching...] Therefore it must be for wise reasons that

Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never-failing skill

He treasures up His bright designs, etc.

29 should be joined in one verse with the last two lines of v. 28.

- And to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.
 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
 And the young men shall utterly fall:
 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their*
 strength;
 They shall mount up *with* wings as eagles;
 They shall run, and not be weary;
 And they shall walk, and not faint.

Not only is Jehovah never weary, but He gives strength to them who are weary.

30. *Even the youths shall faint...*] Better: **And though youths faint and are weary and choice young men stumble** (the protasis to v. 31). Natural strength at its best is exhausted, but—

31. *they that wait upon the LORD shall acquire new strength:* lit. “exchange strength,” cf. ch. ix. 10.

mount up with wings] although an excellent sense, is doubtful grammatically. The authorities are divided between the Targ. on the one hand, and LXX. and Vulg. on the other. The former has “lift up (their) wings”; the latter “put forth (lit. “cause to grow”) pinions” (LXX. *πτεροφνήσουσιν*). The second is by far the best. An allusion to the popular notion that the eagle renews his feathers in his old age (Cheyne) is not probable; it is even doubtful if the idea of *renewal* is in the metaphor at all. It is rather a description (and a very fine one) of the new kind of life which comes to him who waits on the Lord; he is borne aloft on wings of faith and hope.

CH. XLI. THE APPEARANCE OF THE CONQUEROR CYRUS, A PROOF THAT JEHOVAH PRESIDES OVER THE DESTINIES OF ALL NATIONS.

The prophet here touches the soil of contemporary history. Although he is more of a theologian than earlier prophets, he is nevertheless like them an interpreter to Israel of the signs of the times, and the great historical fact which was the occasion of his message is the rise of the new Persian Power. The victories of Cyrus have already challenged the attention of the world. He conquered Media in 549; he overthrew Croesus, king of Lydia, in 540, and captured Babylon in 538. The stand-point of the prophecy is obviously somewhere in this career of conquest, certainly subsequent to 549, when the Medo-Persian empire was consolidated, and most probably subsequent to the defeat of Croesus in 540, the most signal success of Cyrus prior to the occupation of Babylon, which of course is still in the future. See *Introd.* pp. xvii ff.

In form the chapter is dramatic. Two great debates are imagined: the first (vv. 1—7) between Jehovah and the nations; the second (vv. 21—29) between Jehovah and the idols, the subject of both being the appearance of Cyrus. In the intervening passage (vv. 8—20) Jehovah encourages His servant Israel in view of this great crisis of history.

Keep silence before me, O islands;
And let the people renew *their* strength:

41

The chapter accordingly may be analysed as follows:—

i. vv. 1—7. The proof of Jehovah's sovereignty in the form of a discussion between Him and the nations.

(1) vv. 1—4. The nations are summoned into the presence of Jehovah, that it may be seen whether they can produce an explanation of the rise of Cyrus (1). The problem is propounded: who has raised him up? who is leading him from victory to victory? (2 f.); to which the answer follows in the end of v. 4.

(2) vv. 5—7. In their consternation the nations are represented as betaking themselves to the fabrication of new idols to reassure themselves against the advance of the conqueror. (But see the notes below.)

ii. vv. 8—20. Turning from the nations, Jehovah addresses Israel with words of encouragement and consolation.

(1) vv. 8—10. Israel is Jehovah's servant or client, chosen in the person of Abraham to be the organ of the true religion and never since cast off; hence it is upheld through all its history by the strength of its Almighty Protector.

(2) vv. 11—16. Israel need not fear (in the coming convulsions) for by the help of Jehovah it shall put to shame all its enemies, and annihilate mountains of opposition.

(3) vv. 17—20. But Israel, in the distress and misery of the Exile, needs first of all refreshment; and this shall be abundantly and miraculously provided. The figures are suggested by the thirsty march through the desert: but, as in ch. xl. 3 f., the material becomes a symbol of the spiritual,—of Jehovah's all-sufficient grace for the needs of His people.

iii. vv. 21—29. The argument for Jehovah's Divinity is resumed; but this time the parties to the debate are the true God and the idols.

(1) vv. 21—24. The question is first stated in general terms: what proof can the false gods produce of their own divinity? Has any articulate prediction of theirs anticipated the great events that are happening? Or will they *now* undertake to foretell the issue of those events? They cannot; and their pretensions are dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration.

(2) vv. 25—29. Then the appearance of Cyrus is adduced as an instance in which they might have been expected to exercise the divine function of foreknowledge. But while Jehovah has called and strengthened Cyrus and announced it beforehand, *they* have not even foreseen that He would do so.

1. Jehovah calls the heathen nations to a disputation concerning the appearance of Cyrus.

Keep silence before me] A pregnant constr. in the Heb. = **Listen in silence unto me.** On *islands*, see on ch. xl. 15.

renew their strength] The words are somewhat suspicious, as they are repeated from ch. xl. 31, and the thought is hardly suitable at the beginning of an argument. Job xxxviii. 3 is not an exact parallel. Possibly the eye of a scribe may have wandered to the previous verse.

Let them come near; then let them speak:

Let us come near together to judgment.

- 2 Who raised up the righteous *man* from the east,
Called him to his foot,

Gave the nations before him, and made *him* rule over
kings?

He gave *them* as the dust *to* his sword,

And as driven stubble *to* his bow.

- 3 He pursued them, *and* passed safely;

Even by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet.

judgment] (*mishpāt*) is used in the same sense as in Mal. iii. 5 (=“judicial process.”) Cf. Jud. iv. 5.

2, 3. The marvellous career of Cyrus is vividly described in highly poetical language. That the reference is to Cyrus (who is first named in ch. xlv. 28) is unquestionable; although the Jewish exegetes (with the exception of Aben Ezra), and even Calvin, follow the Targ. in applying the verses to Abraham, and his victory over the four kings (Gen. xiv.).

2. *Who hath stirred up...foot*] A much-disputed clause. Two points may be regarded as settled; (1) that the abstract noun *ḥēdeq* cannot be rendered “righteous man” (A.V. following Vulg.); and (2) that it is not to be treated as obj. to “stirred up” (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), but belongs to the second member of the sentence (Heb. accentuation). On the whole the most satisfactory translation is: **Who hath stirred up from the sun-rising (him whom) victory meets at every step?** (lit. “at his foot” cf. Gen. xxx. 30). Comp. R.V. marg. The Heb. verbs for “meet” and “call” are distinct in origin, but closely resemble each other; and the forms are constantly interchanged. The bare sense of “victory” is perhaps an extreme use of *ḥēdeq* (=righteousness) but it is in the line of the prophet’s characteristic use of the expression. It means the outward manifestation that one is in the right, and when, as here, the tribunal is the battle-field, right is equivalent to victory (see Appendix, Note II). If the ordinary sense of “righteousness” is to be retained, the word must be taken as adv. acc., as in R.V.: **Who hath raised up one from the east, whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot?**

gave] *giveth*. *made him rule over*] It is necessary to change at least the vowel-points, reading with Ewald *yārōd*, subdueth (as ch. xlv. 1). The LXX, however, has “strikes terror into” (*yahārīd*).

he gave them as the dust to his sword] The words would naturally read, “he maketh his sword as dust.” But this is an unnatural figure for the swiftness of Cyrus’s conquests; we must either take “his” as equivalent to “their” (which is obviously objectionable), or with the LXX. change the suffix to plur., **he maketh their sword as dust**. So the next clause: **their bow as driven stubble**.

3. *by the way...feet*] The easiest and most acceptable rendering is:

Who hath wrought and done *it*,
 Calling the generations from the beginning?
 I the LORD, the first,
 And with the last; I *am* he.
 The isles saw *it*, and feared;
 The ends of the earth were afraid,
 Drew near, and came.
 They helped every one his neighbour;
 And *every one* said to his brother, Be of good courage.
 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith,
 And he that smootheth *with* the hammer him that
 smote the anvil,

the path with his feet he does not tread,—a picture of the celerity of his movements (Dan. viii. 5). Other interpretations, such as: “by a path which he had not gone (before) with his feet,” or, “disdaining made roads,” or “not returning on his tracks,” are forced, if not impossible.

4. The answer.

calling the generations from the beginning] i.e. guiding the destinies of the nations from the origins of human history. The clause should be connected with what follows: it belongs to the answer, not to the question (“He that calleth”).

I am he] Cf. ch. xlii. 10, 13, xlv. 4, xlviii. 12, also Ps. cii. 27. The sense which best suits the various passages is, “I am the same.” There is probably an allusion to the explanation of the name Jehovah in Ex. iii. 14 ff. Jehovah is “the First,” existing before history began to run its course, and He is “with the last,” an ever-present, unchanging God.

5—7. The alarm of the nations leads to the production of fresh images. The view that vv. 6 and 7 form part of ch. xl. 18—20 has already been mentioned. With regard to the suitability of the verses in their present connexion, opinions differ. While some consider the scene an appropriate sequel to vv. 1—4, and its irony exquisite and well-timed, others find the irony overstrained, and doubt if even the most benighted idolaters could be represented as seeking to arrest the advance of Cyrus by making “a particularly good and strong set of gods.” And it must be admitted that the transition from an assembly of peoples to the inside of an idol factory is extremely abrupt. The view in question gives a somewhat different turn to v. 6 and probably necessitates the excision of v. 5.

5. At the end of the verse LXX. seems to have read “and came together to judgment” (in accordance with v. 1).

6. *they helped*] i.e. the nations. But if the verse stood originally after xl. 19, “they” refers to the two classes of workmen there mentioned. Each helps the other, and says to his fellow, *Cheer up!*

7. *the carpenter*] stands here for the same word as *workman* in xl. 19: it denotes an “artificer” either in metal or wood or stone.

he that smootheth with the hammer] probably the man who fits on the

Saying, It is ready for the soldering :

And he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved.

- 8 But thou, Israel, *art* my servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The seed of Abraham my friend.

golden covering (xl. 19). The translation *anvil* is doubtful, the Targ. has "him that striketh with the mallet."

saying...sodering] Render as R.V.: *saying of the soldering, It is good.* *that it should not be moved*] See ch. xl. 20.

8—20, coming between vv. 1—4 and 21 ff., reads like a digression or an "aside." But beneath the apparent disconnectedness there is a real continuity of thought running through the chapter. It opens with a discussion between Jehovah and the nations, and closes with another between Jehovah and the heathen gods. But these ideal representations have no reality except in so far as they take concrete form in history; and the historical process of which they are the expression is suggested by vv. 8—20. Jehovah's controversy with heathenism is carried on in His Providence, and especially in His vindication of the "right" of Israel against the world. The opposition which Israel encounters from the heathen (vv. 11 f.) is a reflection of the antagonism between the true religion and idolatry; and the essential identity of interest between Jehovah and Israel in this conflict of principles is the basis of the message of consolation which these verses convey. Thus we have the true God and His people over against the false gods and their peoples, and there is a fitness in the introduction at this point of Israel in its ideal functions as the organ of Jehovah's historical purpose. His victory must issue in the redemption of His people, and therefore Israel has no reason to fear the advance of Cyrus, who is God's chosen instrument for the overthrow of idolatry.

8—10. Israel is bidden "Fear not," because of its peculiar relation to Jehovah.

But thou, Israel] In opposition to the other peoples (v. 1). Omit "art" with R.V.

my servant] Cf. Jer. xxx. 10 f., xlv. 27 f.; Ezek. xxviii. 25, xxxvii. 25,—the only older passages (if those in Jeremiah be really older) where the name is applied to Israel. The title is used in its simplest and widest sense, being applied to the nation as a whole, although of course in its ideal aspect, as it exists in the mind of Jehovah. The idea, however, is already a complex one, although the writer does not as yet analyse it into its different elements. (See Introduction, p. xxxi.) The one fact emphasized in this passage is the irrevocable choice or election of God, by which Israel was from its origin in Abraham constituted His servant. Cf. ch. xliii. 10, xlv. 1 f., xlix. 7.

seed of Abraham my friend] (cf. 2 Chr. xx. 7) lit. "my lover": but as Duhm remarks Heb. has no single word to express the reciprocal relation of friendship as distinct from companionship. Cf. James ii. 23, *φίλος*

Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, 9
And called thee from the chief men thereof,
And said unto thee, Thou *art* my servant;
I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: 10

Be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God:

I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;

Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my
righteousness.

Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall 11
be ashamed and confounded:

They shall be as nothing; and they that strive with
thee shall perish.

Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, *even* 12
them that contended with thee:

θεοῦ ἐκλήθη. So among the Mohammedans, Abraham is designated
challl ullah, "Friend of God."

9. *taken* (better, as R.V., **taken hold of**) *from the ends of the earth*] It is disputed whether the reference is to the call of Abraham, or to the Exodus. It is a little difficult to suppose that Egypt could be described as the "ends of the earth" by a Jew; for although the writer may have lived in Babylonia, he could hardly divest himself of the historic consciousness of his nation, that Egypt was the neighbour of Israel. It is more probable, therefore, that he is thinking of Mesopotamia, and of the choice of Israel as effected in the call of Abraham. Note that Abraham is called "my servant" in Gen. xxvi. 24; Ps. cv. 6, 42. For *chief men* render **corners** (R.V.).

cast thee away] **rejected thee**—because of thy smallness.

10. *be not dismayed*] lit. "look not round" in terror.

I will strengthen] The perf. tense used in the original expresses the unalterable determination of the speaker's will; Driver, *Tenses*, § 13.

the right hand of my righteousness] Either "my righteous right hand," or, "my right hand of righteousness." See Appendix, Note II.

11—13. Humanly speaking Israel has cause for fear, being surrounded by opponents; but they shall be put to utter confusion.

11 f. *incensed*] lit. "inflamed," as in ch. xlv. 24; Cant. i. 6. The precise form occurs only in these passages.

they that strive...them that contend...they that war] Lit. **men of thy contention...strife...warfare**; a climax which Delitzsch renders by *adversarii, inimici, hostes*. These expressions are emphatic and stand at the end of their respective clauses, and to each are attached *two* (logical) predicates; hence in v. 11 we should read (as R.V. nearly): **they shall be as nothing, and shall perish—the men etc.**

thou shalt seek and not find them that &c.] Cf. ch. xxxiii. 18.

They that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

- 13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand,
Saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.
14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel;
I will help thee, saith the LORD,
And thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth:
Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat *them* small,

13. *will hold...will help*] **do hold...do help.** For *saying* render: **I who say.**

14—16. Israel itself, in the might of Jehovah, shall be the means of crushing and scattering its foes. The idea, however, is not that of warlike conquest on the part of the Israelites, it is simply that in the contest Israel is as the threshing instrument to the corn, it is armed with an irresistible strength. Cheyne pointed out that in vv. 14, 15 *a*, Israel is addressed in the fem., but that is in all probability a mere freak of the punctuators, suggested by the fem. “worm.”

thou worm Jacob] Cf. Ps. xxii. 6; Job xxv. 6. *ye men of Israel*] supplies a very weak parallel. It is generally taken as an ellipsis for “ye few men of I.” (as if it were מְתֵי מִסְפָּר, Gen. xxxiv. 30 &c.), but that would have to be expressed. We should probably read with Ewald “thou small worm Israel” (רִמָּה for מְתֵי); the two words for “worm” occur together in Job xxv. 6 and also in ch. xiv. 11.

I will help] Render, as before, **I help.**

and thy redeemer, the Holy One] Read with R.V. **and thy Redeemer is the Holy One.** The word for “Redeemer” is *Gō'el*, the technical term for the person charged with the duty of buying back the alienated property of a kinsman, of avenging his death, and certain other obligations (see Lev. xxv. 48 f.; Num. xxxv. 19 ff.; Ruth iii. 12 &c.). It is a standing title of Jehovah in the latter part of Isaiah, occurring in 12 passages (the corresponding verb in 6 others). The verb means originally *to assert a right by purchase*: hence fig. *to reclaim, rescue* &c.; Driver, *Introduction*⁶, p. 418.

15. The *threshing instrument* (*mōrāg*) is a heavy sledge studded on its under surface with sharp stones or knives, drawn by oxen over the floor. See the Note in Driver's *Joel and Amos*, pp. 227 f. It is not a different implement from the *hārūç* of ch. xxviii. 27. Indeed this word *hārūç* is the one here translated “sharp”; and it may be doubted whether it has not intruded into the text as a variant to *mōrāg* (Duhm). The instrument to which Israel is likened is “new” and “many-toothed” (lit. “possessor of mouths” i.e. edges), therefore in the highest state of efficiency.

the mountains...the hills] A figure for formidable enemies; perhaps also for obstacles in general. Comp. ch. xxi. 10; Mic. iv. 13.

And shalt make the hills as chaff.

Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them 16
away,

And the whirlwind shall scatter them :

And thou shalt rejoice in the LORD,

And shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

When the poor and needy seek water, and *there is* 17
none,

And their tongue faileth for thirst,

I the LORD will hear them,

I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

I will open rivers in high places, 18

And fountains in the midst of the valleys :

I will make the wilderness a pool of water,

And the dry land springs of water.

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah 19
tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree ;

I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and
the box tree together :

17—20. With great pathos the prophet recalls to mind the miserable condition of Israel in the present, and adapts his glorious promise to their sense of need. He is thus led to a glowing description of the marvels of the desert journey, in which, however, a spiritual meaning is not lost sight of.

When *the poor...*] Better: **The afflicted and needy are seeking water where there is none, their tongue is parched with thirst.** It may be a question whether such a description applies to all the exiles, or only to those, the true Israel, who were conscious of the religious privations of the Captivity.

18. Cf. ch. xxx. 25. *in high places*] R.V. on the bare heights. The word occurs only in ch. xlix. 9 and in Jeremiah (iii. 2 &c.). In Num. xxiii. 3 the text is doubtful.

19. The desert itself shall be transformed into a grove of stately and beautiful trees.

I will plant] Better: **I will place.** The *shittah tree* is the acacia. The *myrtle* is only mentioned in exilic and post-exilic writings; ch. lv. 13; Zech. i. 8, 10 f.; Neh. viii. 15.

the oil tree] Not the olive, but the oleaster or wild olive.

the fir tree] Rather: **the cypress** (R.V. marg.). With regard to the two last of the seven trees there is no sure tradition. The first (*tidhar*) is identified by different authorities with the fir, the elm and the plane. The other (*tē'asshūr*) is according to some the box-tree, according to others a species of cedar, probably the sherbīn-tree of the Arabs (*cypressus oxycedrus*). The names occur again only in ch. lx. 13; the last, however, is also disguised in a corrupt reading in Ezek. xxvii. 6.

- 20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD hath done this,
And the Holy One of Israel hath created it.
- 21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD;
Bring forth your strong *reasons*, saith the King of Jacob.
- 22 Let them bring *them* forth, and shew us what shall happen:
Let them shew the former *things*, what they *be*,
That we may consider *them*, and know the latter end of them;

20. The ultimate object of this miracle is the demonstration of the creative power of the true God; see ch. xl. 5, lv. 13. The verse seems to shew that the previous description is not *merely* figurative, but that an actual physical transformation of the desert is contemplated.

That they (men in general) *may...consider*] Lit. "lay (to heart)," a common ellipsis. *together* binds the four verbs of the sentence.

21—24. The argument of vv. 1—4 is resumed, but now the idols (v. 23), not their worshippers, are addressed. Foreknowledge is the test of divinity. Can the idols produce any instance whatever of their power to predict, or indeed any proof of life and activity at all?

21. *your strong reasons*] Lit. "your strengths," a military metaphor transferred to controversy; cf. Job xiii. 12. The related word *isma* is used in the same way in Arabic.

the King of Jacob] (Cf. ch. xliii. 15, xlv. 6), referring back, perhaps, to vv. 8 f.,—the King whose "servant" Jacob is.

22. *bring them forth and shew*] It is assumed that the "strong arguments" must be predictions.

the former things] i.e. "things past" (from the standpoint of the speaker) as opposed to things still future (*things to come*). The expression (*hā-rî'shônôth*) occurs with great frequency in the first part of this prophecy. Sometimes the stress lies on the event, sometimes on the prediction; but in reality the phrase includes both ideas—"past events as predicted." So here the challenge is to produce past predictions which have been already verified by the event. There is no ground whatever for the view of Delitzsch and others that in this verse *hā-rî'shônôth* refers to events still future, but in the *immediate* future, as opposed to the more remote future ("things to come"). See G. A. Smith, *Exposition*, p. 121, note.

the latter end of them] *their issue*. Sense and parallelism are undoubtedly improved if (with Duhm) we transpose the last two clauses, reading the closing lines thus:

the former things, what they are do ye announce, that we may lay it to heart; or the coming things let us hear, that we may know their issue.

Or declare us *things* for to come.

Shew the *things* that are to come hereafter,

That we may know that ye *are* gods:

Yea, do good, or do evil,

That we may be dismayed, and behold *it* together.

Behold, ye *are* of nothing, and your work of nought: 24

An abomination *is he that* chooseth you.

I have raised up *one* from the north, and he shall 25
come:

From the rising of the sun shall he call upon my
name:

And he shall come *upon* princes as *upon* mortar,

23. *do good, or do evil*] i.e. "do anything whatever, good or bad" (Jer. x. 5; Zeph. i. 12), give any sign of vitality or intelligence.

that we may be dismayed] Rather: **that we may stare** (in astonishment). (The same word in v. 10.)

24. The silence of the idols settles the controversy.

of nothing...of nought] See on ch. xl. 17. The word 'épha' here is probably a copyist's error for 'épheš.

he that chooseth you—your worshipper.

25—29. The general argument is now brought to bear on the particular case of the raising up of Cyrus.

25. *raised up*] Strictly: **stirred up** (as in v. 2) i.e. "impelled into activity" (Driver).

from the north...from the rising of the sun (cf. v. 2)] Scarcely: "from Media (in the north)" and "from Elam (in the east)." The terms are poetic; the north is the region of mystery, and the east the region of light (ch. xxiv. 15). In point of fact Cyrus came from the north-east.

shall he call upon my name] Render with R.V. **one that calleth** (or, **shall call**) **on my name**. The clause is a relative one, and forms the obj. to "stirred up." The expression can hardly mean less than that Cyrus shall acknowledge Jehovah as God; the meaning "make known everywhere, by his deeds" (Dillmann) is not to be defended. It is true that in ch. xlv. 4 f. it is said that Cyrus *had not known* Jehovah; but it is also said (v. 3) that the effect of his remarkable successes will be "that thou mayest know that I am Jehovah *that calleth thee by thy name*, the God of Israel." There is therefore no difficulty in the idea that Cyrus, who was at first the unconscious instrument of Jehovah's purpose, shall at length recognise that Jehovah was the true author of his success. But the further explanation that Cyrus shall "become conscious of his original religious affinity to the Jews, and act upon that consciousness" (Cheyne) goes beyond the language of the prophet.

come upon princes] is a possible construction; but it is better, with many comm. since Clericus, to read "tread" (*yābûš* for *yābôš*). The word for "princes" (*šāgān*) is Assyrian (*shaknu*) and occurs first in Ezekiel.

And as the potter treadeth clay.

26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?

And beforetime, that we may say, *He is righteous?*

Yea, *there is* none that sheweth, yea, *there is* none that declareth,

Yea, *there is* none that heareth your words.

27 The first *shall say* to Zion, Behold, behold them :

And I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

28 For I beheld, and *there was* no man ;

Even amongst them, and *there was* no counsellor,

That, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

29 Behold, they *are* all vanity ; their works *are* nothing :

Their molten images *are* wind and confusion.

26. He is *righteous*] **He is in the right** (cf. Ex. ix. 27); or, simply, **Right !** (cf. ch. xliii. 9), although the adj. is always used of persons, except in Deut. iv. 8 (of the divine ordinances).

27. *The first...behold them*] A very perplexing sentence: lit. "A first one to Zion, Behold, behold them!" We may render (nearly as R.V.) (I) **first (have said) to Zion, Behold**, etc. Or we may supply the verb from the following line, thus: "I first will give to Zion (one saying) Behold," etc.; or "I will give a first one (i.e. a forerunner) to Zion (saying), Behold, etc." None of these renderings is satisfactory, and the text is probably corrupt. See Cheyne, *Sacred Books of O.T.*, who renders: "I, the first one, announced it to Zion, &c." In any case there appears to be a reference back to ch. xl. 9 ff.; and the general sense must be that that prediction was the first authoritative declaration of the meaning of the appearance of Cyrus.

one that bringeth good tidings] **an evangelist** (see ch. xl. 9).

28. *For I beheld, and there was*] Rather as R.V. **And when I look, there is.** Cf. l. 2. *even amongst them*] Better: **and among**

these, viz., the idols; the previous clause referring to their worshippers.

no counsellor] None who can advise in the present crisis.

29. The last word of the argument.

all of them (R.V.)] idols and worshippers together.

their works] are the images of the gods, "the work of men's hands" (parallel to "molten images" below).

confusion] "nothingness"—chaos (see ch. xl. 17).

CH. XLII. THE HIGH DESTINY OF ISRAEL AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH CONTRASTED WITH ITS PRESENT ABASEMENT AND UNFITNESS FOR ITS MISSION.

The two preceding chapters were to some extent introductory to what follows. Nearly all the leading ideas of the prophecy have been already

expressed, and all the personages of the drama—Jehovah, Israel, Cyrus, the nations and their gods—have been brought upon the stage, or at least have been mentioned. With this chapter the prophet begins to amplify and develop the various conceptions, already touched upon, by means of which he is enabled to interpret the action of Jehovah in the present crisis of history. And the first which he takes up is the thought of Israel, Jehovah's Servant. Up to ch. xlv. 23, that is the central and recurrent idea; in the end of that chapter the figure of Cyrus comes to the front, and the main theme for several chapters is the mission which he executes in the service of Jehovah. But the treatment is nowhere exhaustive; and although the minor sections are remarkably distinct, sharply defined stages or advances in the general thought can hardly be found. The writer glides rapidly from one theme to another, frequently returning on his track; and while some conceptions are dropped as he proceeds, there are others, and these the most important, which run on to the close.

In the view of many expositors, indeed, an entirely new personage is introduced in the opening verses of this chapter, namely, the Servant of Jehovah, whom these writers hold to be distinct from Israel. This is the deepest problem in the whole prophecy, and is only to be solved by paying the closest attention to the exegesis of the individual passages and the prophet's general scheme of thought. As supplementing the notes on vv. 1—4 below, see Introduction, pp. xxxii—xxxvii, and Appendix, Note I.

Ch. xlii. consists of three divisions:

i. vv. 1—9. The ideal calling and function of Israel.

(1) vv. 1—4. A portrait of Israel as the Lord's Servant from the point of view of Jehovah, who is the speaker.

(2) vv. 5—9. The truth embodied in the portrait is held up as a ground of encouragement to Israel; Jehovah, as it were, pledges His Godhead to the fulfilment of the ideal in the experience of the people.

ii. vv. 10—17. The prophet's thoughts are thus led forward to the great redemptive act by which Jehovah will raise Israel to the height of its glorious destiny.

(1) vv. 10—13 are a poem calling on the whole earth to rejoice in Jehovah's triumph over His enemies.

(2) vv. 14—17. Jehovah Himself is then introduced as the speaker, announcing that He will rouse Himself from His long inactivity, to bring about the redemption of His people, and the consequent overthrow of idolatry.

iii. vv. 18—25. The prophet addresses himself to Israel in its present state of blindness and wretchedness. He calls on the exiles to reflect on all that they have suffered at the hand of their God, and to recognise in it the effect of their obduracy and unfaithfulness to their calling, their misuse of religious privileges, and their positive transgressions of the law of Jehovah.

1—4. Israel as the Lord's Servant. The features of the portrait are these: (1) It starts from the thought of ch. xli. 8 ff., the *election* by which Israel is constituted the Servant of Jehovah; but this is immediately followed by (2) the *equipment* of the Servant with the Divine

- 42 Behold my servant, whom I uphold;
 Mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth;
 I have put my spirit upon him:
 He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Spirit, and (3) the *mission* for which he is raised up, viz., to be the organ of the true religion to the world (v. 1). (4) The *manner* and *spirit of the Servant's working* are then described; his unobtrusiveness and tenderness (3 f.). (5) His unflinching *constancy* in the prosecution of his work, and his final and complete *success*. The whole description is singularly elevated, and impressive; Jehovah speaks of His Servant as He sees him, and as he shall yet be revealed to the world.

If the Servant of the Lord here described is Israel, he is obviously not Israel in its actual condition of bondage and inefficiency. He is Israel according to its idea,—the Divine ideal after and towards which Jehovah is fashioning the people. This ideal is personified, and it is the vividness of the personification that leads many readers to think that an individual must be meant. But such impressions are not greatly to be trusted. It is a very hazardous thing to set limits to the possibilities of O.T. personification. The real question is whether the characteristics ascribed to the Servant are capable of being realised by the nation of Israel, or whether they are such as to demand a separate and personal embodiment. Even if it should be found that some details do not readily fall in with the national interpretation it would not at once follow that that interpretation was false; for no one argues that our Lord's parables must be literally true stories, because they contain features to which no spiritual meaning can be attached. But that consideration need not trouble us in this passage, for it will be seen that all that is here said of the Servant is applicable to Israel in the ideal light in which it is here presented. Certainly no historic individual *of that age* can possibly be the subject of the picture.

1. The election, equipment, and mission of the Servant.

Behold my servant] LXX. reads Ἰακώβ ὁ παῖς μου ("Jacob my servant") and in the next line, Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου ("Israel my chosen").

whom I uphold] Cf. ch. xli. 10.

mine elect] R.V. *my chosen*. Used of Israel ch. xliii. 20, xlv. 4; cf. the verb in xli. 8 etc.; and Deut. vii. 7 &c.

I have put my spirit upon him] The Servant's function being prophetic, he is, like the prophets, endowed with the spirit of Jehovah. Cf. ch. xi. 2 ff., where the Messiah is endowed with the Spirit for His royal functions.

he shall bring forth (or *send forth*) *judgment to the nations*] This is the ultimate purpose of the Servant's being raised up,—the diffusion of the true religion throughout the world. The word "judgement" (*mishpāt*) occurs three times in these few verses, and evidently in a special sense. The plural is often used of the ordinances (lit. "judicial decisions") of Jehovah; these are sometimes viewed as a unity and

He shall not cry, nor lift up,
Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.
A bruised reed shall he not break,
And the smoking flax shall he not quench:
He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.
He shall not fail nor be discouraged,
Till he have set judgment in the earth:
And the isles shall wait for his law.

2

3

4

described by the sing. (see ch. li. 4; Jer. v. 4, viii. 7). This is the sense here; it means the religion of Jehovah regarded as a system of practical ordinances. All recent commentators instance the close parallel of the Arabic *dīn*, which denotes both a system of usages and a religion. This the Servant shall "send forth" to the nations by his prophetic word. The best commentary on the passage is ch. ii. 1—4.

2. The Servant's unobtrusive manner of working. Not by clamorous self-assertion in the high places of the world, but by silent spiritual influences his great work shall be accomplished. Comp. the striking application in Matt. xii. 17 ff. This feature of the Servant's activity can hardly have been suggested by the demeanour of the prophets of Israel; and for that reason the prophecy is all the more wonderful as a perception of the true conditions of spiritual work. It reminds us of the "still small voice" in which Elijah was made to recognise the power of Jehovah (1 Ki. xix. 12 f.). *nor lift up*] sc. his voice.

3. His gentleness towards the downtrodden expiring good in men. *the smoking flax*] R.V. marg. *the dimly burning wick*. The metaphor (like the preceding) involves a *litotes*: the meaning is that instead of crushing the expiring elements of goodness he will strengthen and purify them. It is an interesting question whether these rudiments of religion are conceived as existing in the heathen world or in the breasts of individual Israelites. The former view is no doubt that to which the national interpretation of the Servant most readily accommodates itself, and is also most in keeping with the scope of the passage as a whole. But in later sections a mission in and to Israel is undoubtedly assigned to the Servant, and a reference to that here cannot be pronounced impossible.

unto truth] i.e. probably, *in accordance with truth*. The rendering of R.V., however, "in truth," may be right.

4. His constancy. The words *fail* and *be discouraged* correspond in the original to "dimly burning" and "broken" in v. 3. (See R.V. marg.) The former is used of the failing eyesight of Eli (1 Sam. iii. 2); cf. Ezek. xxi. 7 (R.V. marg.).

for his law] *his instruction* (see on ch. i. 10), his revelation of the truth. It is doubtful whether the verb of this clause should be rendered "shall wait" or "do wait." If the latter be correct, the remarkable thought may be expressed that already the best of the heathen are dissatisfied with their religious systems and long for a purer faith.

- 5 Thus saith God the LORD,
 He that created the heavens, and stretched them out;
 He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh
 out of it;
 He that giveth breath unto the people upon it,
 And spirit to them that walk therein:
 6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness,
 And will hold thine hand, and will keep thee,
 And give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light
 of the Gentiles;

5—9. Jehovah's promise to Israel, based on the preceding description. *God*] in the Heb. *hā-'ēl*, **the God**,—the God who alone is truly God, who has created and sustains all things.

spread forth] or "made firm." The word means to beat out into a thin surface, and probably (as in the noun "firmament") combines the ideas of density and extension (cf. ch. xliv. 24; Ps. cxxxvi. 6). By a strong zeugma this verb is made to govern a second object, *that which cometh out of it*, which here probably denotes "vegetation" (see on ch. xxxiv. 1).

breath and spirit are here nearly identical, the divine principle of life breathed into man at his creation; Gen. ii. 7.

6. *called thee in righteousness*] i.e. in accordance with a steadfast and consistent purpose. See Appendix, Note II, and cf. ch. xlv. 13.

and will keep thee] R.V. marg. ("form thee") derives the verb from a different root; if this sense be taken, it is necessary to read the words in close connexion with what follows: "I will form and appoint thee for a covenant &c."

for a covenant of the people] The expression occurs again in ch. xlix. 8, and is one of the most difficult in this prophecy. The idea is necessarily a pregnant one, and it is nowhere developed in such a way that we can be sure of the exact meaning. The notion of a "national league" must be dismissed, because the Heb. *bērith*, unlike the German "Bund," nowhere means "confederation." To take "people" in the sense of "humanity" is also unsuitable because of xlix. 8, which clearly limits the reference to Israel. Looking at the phrase by itself two constructions are grammatically possible: (a) We may render it, "a covenant of a people," or "a covenant people," after the analogy of Gen. xvi. 12, where Ishmael is called "a wild ass of a man" (cf. "Wonder of a Counsellor" in ch. ix. 6). This, however, is somewhat strained. (b) The most natural, and on the whole probably the most satisfactory rendering is, "a nation's covenant," i.e. the covenant upon which a nation is constituted, the conception implied being that Israel's future national existence must be based on a new covenant between it and Jehovah (ch. lv. 3; Jer. xxxi. 30—32). The difficulty is thus reduced to the pregnancy of the statement that the Servant *is* or *shall be* this covenant. It is probably to be explained in accordance with such expressions as

To open the blind eyes,
 To bring out the prisoners from the prison,
And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.
 I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name:
 And my glory will I not give to another,
 Neither my praise to graven images.
 Behold, the former *things* are come to pass,
 And new *things* do I declare:
 Before they spring forth I tell you of them.
 Sing unto the LORD a new song,
And his praise from the end of the earth,
 Ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein;

“thou shalt be a blessing” (Gen. xii. 2). As “blessing” there means “cause of blessing,” so here “covenant” may be equivalent to the *ground* or (as most commentators explain) the *mediator* of a national covenant. The idea at all events must be something like this: the Divine ideal represented by the Servant of the Lord becomes the basis of a new national life, inasmuch as it expresses that for the sake of which Jehovah enters into a new covenant relation with His people.

for a light of the nations] The ultimate destiny of the Servant; see on v. 1.

7. *to open...to bring out*] With this rendering the subj. of the two verbs is the Servant. The inf., however, may have the sense of a gerund in *do* (Davidson, *Synt.* § 93); in which case the subj. is Jehovah Himself: *opening blind eyes...bringing out*, &c. This is doubtless the easier construction; but cf. xlix. 6, 8. The “blindness” spoken of is spiritual (see vv. 18—20); imprisonment is a metaphor for the Captivity (v. 22); although a spiritual application may be included here also.

8. *my glory...another*] (Cf. ch. xlviii. 11)—the glory of true deity, which would be forfeited if Jehovah were unable to predict the future, or if His predictions should fail (v. 9).

9. *the former things*] the things formerly predicted. The reference probably is to prophecies just fulfilled in the successes of Cyrus. The *new things* are the substance of the present prophecy, the exaltation of the Servant, the redemption of Israel, and the conversion of the heathen. (See *Introd.*, p. xxi.)

10—13. The mention of “new things” in v. 9 suggests this “new song,” in which the creation is called to celebrate Jehovah’s redemption of His people. The expression is common in the Psalms (xxxiii. 3, xl. 3, xcvi. 1, xcvi. 1, cxliv. 9, cxlix. 1; cf. Rev. xiv. 3). These Psalmists probably borrowed the term from our prophet, whose use of it bears the stamp of originality. It is a song “such as has never been heard in the heathen world” (Delitzsch). See ch. xxiv. 14—16.

from the end of the earth] means (as in Gen. xix. 4; Jer. li. 31) “from end to end.”

ye that go down to the sea] *seafarers*, cf. Ps. cvii. 23. There is some

The isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up *their* voice,

The villages *that* Kedar doth inhabit:

Let the inhabitants of the rock sing,

Let them shout from the top of the mountains.

12 Let them give glory unto the LORD,
And declare his praise in the islands.

13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man,
He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war:

awkwardness in the following words: *and all that is therein* (lit. "and the fulness thereof"), which are naturally parallel to "the sea" and not to "those who go down to it." The harshness is removed by a plausible emendation of Lowth, who reads the whole clause in accordance with Ps. xcvi. 11, xcvi. 7 **let the sea roar and the fulness thereof** (יָרֵעַם for יוֹרֵד).

the isles] See on ch. xl. 15. The mention of the sea and its coasts before the land is one indication of the prominence which the western lands have in the mind of this prophet.

11. *the wilderness and the cities thereof*] The "cities," like the "villages" of the next line, are those in the oases, occupied by the settled Arabs; the former are probably the great centres of the caravan trade, like Tadmor and Petra. *Kedar* (see on ch. xxi. 16) is sometimes referred to as a tribe of nomadic, tent-dwelling Arabs (Ps. cxx. 5; Cant. i. 5; Jer. xlix. 28 f.); here they are villagers, what the modern Arabs call *ḥaḍarîya* (connected with the word *ḥaḍēr*, used here) as opposed to the *wabarîya* or nomads (Delitzsch). In Jer. ii. 10 Kedar stands, as here, in opposition to the Mediterranean countries.

the inhabitants of the rock] (i.e. "the rock-dwellers"). R.V. has "the inhabitants of Sela," which would probably be Petra. It is difficult to say which translation is preferable. It should be mentioned that the identification of Sela, in any O.T. passage, with Petra is resisted by many scholars (see on ch. xvi. 1).

sing] Rather, **exult**,—a different word at any rate from that used in v. 10.

12. *glory and praise*: the same words as in v. 8.

13. The reason for the universal exultation; Jehovah takes the field against His enemies. The gracious side of His intervention is reserved for v. 16.

The LORD shall go forth] The technical expression for the initiation of a campaign (2 Sam. xi. 1; Am. v. 3 &c.)

as a mighty man (or, **hero**)... *a man of war*] Similar representations in ch. xxviii. 21, lix. 16 f.; Ex. xv. 3; Zech. xiv. 3, &c. *Jealousy* (better, **zeal**) means "passion" in very varied senses. Here it seems equivalent to the "battle fever." See ch. ix. 7.

He shall cry, yea, roar;
 He shall prevail against his enemies.
 I have long time holden my peace;
 I have been still, *and* refrained myself:
 Now will I cry like a travailing woman;
 I will destroy and devour at once.
 I will make waste mountains and hills,
 And dry up all their herbs;
 And I will make the rivers islands,
 And I will dry up the pools.
 And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew
 not;
 I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known:

he shall cry, yea, roar] He shall raise His battle cry, yea, shout aloud.

he shall prevail] R.V. "he shall do mightily"; lit., he shall play the hero. The form occurs elsewhere only in Job (xv. 25, xxxvi. 9).

14—17. Jehovah rouses Himself from His inactivity. The passage, which obviously continues the figure of v. 13, is exceedingly bold in its anthropomorphism; it is Jehovah's battle-song.

14. *I have long time holden my peace*] Lit. "I have been silent from of old." The period of silence perhaps goes back further than the Exile; it is the time during which Jehovah has permitted the oppression of His people by the heathen.

I have been still] Lit. "been dumb"; but "still" expresses the idea better; it is abstinence from action, not from speech, that is meant. *refrained myself*] Cf. Gen. xliii. 31, xlv. 1.

now will I cry out] The verb does not recur in the O.T. In Aramaic it is used of the bleating of sheep. Here it denotes the convulsive utterance of uncontrollable emotion, "like a travailing woman."

destroy and devour at once] Render with R.V. *gasp and pant together*; "together" uniting the *three* ideas.

15. Jehovah's breath of anger will make the fairest and best watered regions an arid waste. Cf. ch. xl. 7, 24, and note the contrasted image in xli. 18 f. For *herbs*, read *herbage*. The word *islands* is used in a peculiar sense, of dry land as opposed to water.

16. The prophet hastens on to the gracious issue of God's interposition, the homebringing of the captives through the trackless desert.

the blind here are hardly the spiritually blind, those who cannot discern God's purpose (as v. 18); what is meant is that the travellers cannot see their path, just as the desert is the region of "darkness" because it has no track (cf. Jer. ii. 6, 31). For *knew* and *have known*, render *know*, with R.V.

I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked things straight.

These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly
ashamed, that trust in graven images,

That say to the molten images, Ye *are* our gods.

18 Hear, ye deaf;

And look, ye blind, that *ye* may see.

19 Who *is* blind, but my servant?

Or deaf, as my messenger *that* I sent?

crooked things straight] crooked places a plain (cf. ch. xl. 4).

these things... forsake them] Better: These are the things I have determined to do (perf. of resolution) and not leave undone.

17. The confusion of the idolaters, through the "revelation of the glory of God" (ch. xl. 5), the Babylonians being those specially referred to (cf. ch. xlv. 1); *they shall be utterly ashamed* (as ch. xli. 11).

18—25. An expostulation with Israel for its insensibility to the privileges it has enjoyed. The passage is of considerable interest for the light which it throws on the sense in which the title "Servant of the Lord" is to be understood. The discrepancy between the description in vv. 1—4 and that here given is at first sight perplexing. There the Servant is spoken of as the perfect and successful worker for God, here he is addressed as blind and deaf and altogether unfit for Jehovah's purpose. Yet it is extremely unnatural to suppose that the writer applies the term to two entirely different subjects. To suggest, as the prophet's meaning, that the inefficient Servant is to be replaced by another, who shall accomplish the work in which the former has failed is perhaps the least satisfactory of all explanations, and misrepresents the teaching of the prophecy. That the subject here addressed is Israel in its actual present condition is beyond dispute; hence vv. 1—4 must also be regarded as in some sense a description of Israel. The contrast, in short, is not between the false servant and the true,—the one a nation and the other an individual,—but between Israel as it really is and Israel according to its idea. Indeed it would seem that what the prophet wishes his people to lay to heart is just this contrast between its ideal calling and its actual accomplishments; and this is more intelligible if the ideal has been already depicted, and is still present to the writer's mind.

18. *look* and *see* are distinguished as in 2 Kings iii. 14; Job xxxv. 5, &c.; the former is to direct the gaze towards, the latter to take in the significance of an object.

19. Israel is the blind and deaf nation *par excellence*, because no other nation has been so tested by the opportunity of seeing and hearing (see on v. 21). *my messenger that I send* (R.V.)] Cf. ch. xlv. 26, where "messengers" is parallel to "servant."

Who *is* blind as he that is perfect,
 And blind as the LORD's servant?
 Seeing many *things*, but thou observest not;
 Opening the ears, but he heareth not.
 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake;
 He will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable.
 But this *is* a people robbed and spoiled;
They are all of them snared in holes,

as he that is perfect] R.V. has, "as he that is at peace with me." The meaning of the Heb. *mēshullām* (a proper name in 2 Ki. xxii. 3; Ezra viii. 16, and often) is uncertain. Many take it as the equivalent of the Arabic "Moslim," = "the surrendered one" (Cheyne, *Comm.*). It is no objection to this that it is based on an Aramaic use of the verb; but the idea seems hardly suitable, inasmuch as it implies a state of *character* which the actual Israel does not possess. Probably a better rendering is **the befriended one** (sc. by Jehovah), after the analogy of Job v. 23. Another possible translation would be "the required one" (see R.V. marg.), but it is difficult to attach any definite meaning to the expression in this context.

blind in the last clause should no doubt be **deaf**, as is read in some MSS.

20. *Seeing many things*] Render with R.V. in accordance with the consonantal text, **Thou hast seen many things**; the form has been quite needlessly changed by the punctuators. The idea of the verse is that the great historical facts of revelation have been within the cognisance of Israel, but it has failed to apprehend their true import. Cf. ch. vi. 9 ff.

21. The verse reads: **It was Jehovah's pleasure, for His righteousness' sake, to magnify instruction (or, Revelation) and glorify it.** (See R.V.) *Righteousness* is to be understood exactly as in v. 6; and the verbs "magnify" and "glorify" are subordinate to "was pleased," expressing that which Jehovah was pleased to do. (See Davidson, *Synt.* § 83, R. 1.) The only question is whether the reference is to the past revelation in law and prophecy, by which Israel has failed to profit; or to the future glorification of religion by its diffusion among the nations (vv. 1, 4, 6). The last is probably nearest the truth. The verse is not an explanation of the "many things" that Israel has seen and failed to see, but introduces a new thought. It expresses the great purpose which Jehovah had cherished with regard to Israel—to make it the instrument of extending the knowledge of His will to the world. This is the true "glorification" of the *Tōrāh* of Israel (v. 4).

22 ff. shew how this design has hitherto been frustrated by the necessity of imposing chastisement on Israel, till it should learn its true mission.

But this...] Rather, **But it.** *snared in holes*] This is no doubt the sense, although a change of pointing seems necessary in the verb, making it a passive (read *hūphah* for *hāphēah*). The metaphor is for

And they are hid in prison houses :
 They are for a prey, and none delivereth ;
For a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

23 Who among you will give ear to this?

Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?

24 Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?
 Did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned?
 For they would not walk in his ways,
 Neither were they obedient unto his law.

25 Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his
 anger, and the strength of battle :
 And it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not ;
 And it burned him, yet he laid *it* not to heart.

the captivity, but it is only a metaphor ; the prophet does not imagine that a large proportion of the exiles were actually incarcerated in dungeons.

23. The question expresses the prophet's wish that now at last some of the people should begin to realise the significance of their relation to Jehovah, and prepare themselves for the great deliverance.

will give ear to this] i.e. to the substance of the present exhortation, —the contrast between the ideal calling of Israel and its present position, its failure to realise its mission, and (especially) the reason of that failure (vv. 24 f.).

for the time to come] in contrast to past disobedience. It is evident that the prophet expects the mission of Israel to be realised by a conversion of the nation. The process of that conversion is powerfully described in ch. liii.

24, 25. The enigma of Israel's history is that Jehovah its God has given it over to its enemies,—a truth which the nation as a whole has never yet laid to heart.

for a spoil] A better reading (which is probably that intended by the consonantal text) is **to the spoiler**. (Cf. ch. x. 13.)

did not the LORD] The whole of this answer is regarded by Duhm and Cheyne as spurious. Its removal gets rid of an awkward alternation of persons, and enables us to read v. 25 as a continuation of the question in the first part of v. 24. But Duhm goes too far when he objects to the *substance* of the answer, on the ground that so explicit a confession of sin is improbable before ch. xliii. 1 ff. The two last clauses are to be translated as relatives, **and in whose ways they would not walk** (so R.V.), **and whose law they would not obey**.

25. *Therefore* should be simply **and**. *the strength of battle* **the violence of war**, which (as in ch. ix. 18 ff. etc.) is compared to a fire. *he knew not*] i.e. "understood it not ;" hardly, "heeded it not." Israel felt its calamities keenly enough, but did not comprehend their significance, as a visitation from Jehovah. Note the contrast in ch. xliii. 2.

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, 43

CH. XLIII. 1.—XLIV. 5. ISRAEL, IN SPITE OF ITS SIN AND BLINDNESS, IS COMFORTED WITH GRACIOUS PROMISES OF REDEMPTION.

(i) *vv.* 1—7. This section is very closely connected in thought with *vv.* 18—25 of the previous chapter. The contrast, however, is no longer between the ideal Israel and the actual, but between Israel in the misery of exile and Israel in the glory of its coming salvation. The prophet has just reminded the captives that the author of their calamities is Jehovah, against whom they have sinned; now he assures them that in spite of these sins God has not finally cast them off, and directs their thoughts to the bright future about to dawn on them. Jehovah is about to redeem Israel, which He has formed and chosen for His own (*vv.* 1, 2); He will ransom it at the cost of powerful and wealthy nations which must take its place as servants of the world-power, because it is precious in His sight (*vv.* 3, 4); He will gather together its scattered members from the remotest quarters of the world (*vv.* 5—7).

(ii) *vv.* 8—13. The argument from prophecy is here repeated, and again in the dramatic form of a judicial process between Jehovah and the assembled nations. These are challenged to bring forward their witnesses to prove that their gods have foretold this wonderful event, or that any past prediction of theirs has been verified (*v.* 9). Jehovah on His part brings forward His servant Israel, a people blind and deaf, but able at least to bear witness to the *fact* that He has given incontestable proof of Divinity by predicting this great deliverance (*vv.* 8, 10 ff.).

(iii) *vv.* 14—21. The fall of Babylon is here for the first time explicitly announced (*vv.* 14, 15), as the preliminary to Israel's restoration. The glory of this "new thing" shall eclipse all "former things," even the wonders of the exodus from Egypt and the marching through the wilderness (*vv.* 16 ff.). The prophet's imagination again fixes on the concrete image of the miraculous way through the desert as the emblem of Jehovah's saving power (*v.* 19 ff.).

(iv) *vv.* 22—28. A renewed remonstrance with Israel, similar in tone to ch. xlii. 18—25. The general idea of the section seems to be that while Israel has been utterly careless of Jehovah (*v.* 22), burdening Him not with lavish offerings but merely with its sins and iniquities (*vv.* 23, 24), He, for His own sake, forgives its trespasses (*v.* 25), although the people have forfeited all claim on His mercy (*vv.* 26—28). (But see the Notes below, pp. 42 f.)

(v) Ch. xliv. 1—5. By the outpouring of His Spirit, Jehovah shall so bless and prosper His people, that proselytes from among the heathen shall voluntarily attach themselves to the restored nation. This promise stands in contrast to the severity of the preceding verses, exactly as *vv.* 1—7 follow upon the last strophe of ch. xlii.

1—7. Israel, though blind and deaf (ch. xlii. 18 ff.), is precious in the sight of Jehovah its Creator, who is now about to shew Himself as its Redeemer.

But now] Introducing the contrast to xlii. 25.

- And he that formed thee, O Israel,
 Fear not: for I have redeemed thee,
 I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.
- 2 When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee;
 And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:
 When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt;
 Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
- 3 For I *am* the LORD thy God,
 The Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:
 I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom,
 Ethiopia and Seba for thee.
- 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight,

that created thee...that formed thee] Three verbs which express Jehovah's creative activity are applied in this prophecy to His special relations to Israel: "create" (vv. 1, 7, 15); "form" (vv. 1, 21, xlv. 2, 21, 24, xlv. 11, xlix. 5 (lxiv. 8); "make" (xlv. 2, li. 13, liv. 5).

I have redeemed thee] Rather, **I redeem thee** (perf. of certainty). See on ch. xli. 14.

I have called (I call) thee by thy name] i.e. I address thee as one who is familiar and dear (xlv. 3 f., cf. Ex. xxxi. 2; Est. ii. 14); stronger than the simple "call" (xlii. 6, xlix. 1).

2. When Jehovah was angry the fire burned Israel (ch. xlii. 25), but now with Jehovah on its side, it is invulnerable in the severest trials. "Water" and "fire" are common images of extreme peril; the former in Ps. xxxii. 6, xlii. 7, cxiv. 4 f.; the latter in ch. xlii. 25 (cf. Dan. iii. 17, 27); both together Ps. lxvi. 12. For *burned* render *scorched* (Prov. vi. 28).

3. *thy Saviour*] or, "Deliverer"; a favourite designation of Jehovah with this prophet; v. 11, ch. xlv. 15, 21, xlix. 26 (lx. 16, lxiii. 8). The second half of the verse shews on how large a scale this deliverance is to be executed.

I give Egypt as thy ransom...] The meaning appears to be that Cyrus will be compensated for the emancipation of Israel by the conquest of these African nations, which did not belong to the Babylonian Empire. As a matter of fact the conquest of Egypt was effected by Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus, although it is said to have been contemplated by Cyrus himself (Herod. i. 153) and is actually (though wrongly) attributed to him by Xenophon (*Cyrop.* viii. 6. 20).

Seba (Gen. x. 7; Ps. lxxii. 10; ch. xlv. 14) was, according to Josephus, Meroë, the northern province of Ethiopia, lying between the Blue and the White Nile.

ransom is strictly a money payment by which a man escapes the forfeit of his life (see Ex. xxi. 30; Num. xxxv. 31 f.; Prov. vi. 35 &c.).

4. *Since thou wast...thou hast been...*] Rather, **Because thou art**

Thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee :
 Therefore will I give men for thee,
 And people for thy life.
 Fear not : for I *am* with thee :
 I will bring thy seed from the east,
 And gather thee from the west ;
 I will say to the north, Give *up* ;
 And to the south, Keep not back :
 Bring my sons from far,
 And my daughters from the ends of the earth ;
Even every one that is called by my name :
 For I have created him for my glory,
 I have formed him ; yea, I have made him.

5

6

7

8

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,
 And the deaf that have ears.

precious in my sight, art honourable, and I love thee (three coordinate clauses). The A.V. seems to take the conjunction in a temporal sense, a view which has been defended by some commentators on grammatical grounds, but is quite unsuitable.

men] in contrast to a money payment.
 (as R.V.).

For *people* read **peoples**

5—7. The ingathering of the Dispersion (cf. ch. xlix. 12).

6. *my sons...my daughters*] See ch. i. 1. The individual Israelites are the children of the marriage between Jehovah and the nation (Hos. ii. 2, 5; Ez. xvi. 20, &c.).

7. *that is called by my name*] i.e. who belongs to the community in which Jehovah is worshipped.

for I have created him] Render with R.V. **and whom I have created.**
for my glory] Although it is only the restored nation that can fully manifest Jehovah's glory to the world, each of its scattered units shares the dignity which belongs to Israel as a whole.

8—13. Another imaginary judgement scene (cf. ch. xli. 1—4, 21—28), in which Israel appears as Jehovah's witness to the truth of His prophecies.

8. *Bring forth*] i.e. not "from exile," but "before the tribunal." The sense demands an imperat. or inf. abs., and the Heb. pointing (which gives a perf.) must be altered accordingly.

a blind people that have eyes...] "a people which is blind and yet has eyes &c." This cannot mean "a people *once* blind and deaf, but *now* in possession of sight and hearing"; and it scarcely means anything so subtle as "a people which though blind and deaf yet possesses the organs of sight and hearing," and therefore can be made to see and hear (v. 10). The paradox is the same as in ch. xlii. 20 ("thou hast seen many things but thou observest not," &c.) and goes back to ch. vi.

- 9 Let all the nations be gathered together,
 And let the people be assembled:
 Who among them can declare this,
 And shew us former *things*?
 Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be
 justified:
 Or let them hear, and say, *It is truth*.
- 10 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD,
 And my servant whom I have chosen:

9 ff.; the sense being that while Israel lacks insight into the divine meaning of its own history, it is nevertheless a perfectly competent witness to the bare external *facts*; it has *heard* the predictions and *seen* them fulfilled.

9. *Let all the nations be gathered together*] The form of the verb in Heb. presents difficulty. By some it is treated as a rare form of imperat., on the ground of two doubtful analogies (so R.V. marg., "Gather yourselves together &c."). Others take it as a precatif. perf. (A.V. and R.V.) the existence of which in Heb. is also disputed (see Driver, *Tenses*, § 20). There seems, however, no reason why it should not be understood as a perf. in the ordinary sense: **All the nations are gathered together**. The assembling of the parties in the process naturally precedes the calling of witnesses; and this clause is descriptive of the scene presupposed by v. 8. The following verb should then be pointed as a consecutive impf.: **and the peoples are assembled**.

who among them (the heathen gods, represented by their worshippers) *can declare this*] i.e. the contents of the prophecy, vv. 1—7.

former things] predictions of the events that have already taken place. If they profess to do this, then *let them bring forth their witnesses*, in support of their contention.

or let them hear, and say] The subject changes to the witnesses, who are supposed to hear the allegations of the false deities, and corroborate them.

be justified...It is truth] See on ch. xli. 26.

10. The gods are unable to meet the challenge, and Jehovah turns to His servant Israel, whose very presence is evidence of His power both to predict and to deliver. The words *and my servant* are not a complement of the subject ("ye are my witnesses, and [so is] my Servant") but of the predicate (**ye are my witnesses and [ye are] my Servant**). The former view would imply some sort of distinction between the Servant and Israel, whether of an individual over against the nation, or of a part of the nation over against the whole. But whatever view may be held of the personality of the Servant, the natural construction of the sentence places it alongside of those numerous passages where the title is applied to Israel. To bear witness to Jehovah's divinity is one of the functions of Israel as the Servant of the Lord.

That ye may know and believe me,
And understand that I *am* he:
Before me there was no God formed,
Neither shall there be after me.

I, *even* I, *am* the LORD;

11

And beside me *there is* no saviour.

I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, 12

When *there was* no strange god among you:

Therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I
am God.

Yea, before the day *was* I *am* he;

13

that ye may know...] In the very act of bearing witness, it would seem that the mind of Israel is to be awakened to the grand truth of which its own history is the evidence,—the sole divinity of Jehovah, and its own unique position as His servant.

I am he] See ch. xli. 4.

before me there was no god formed] Strictly, of course, the idea is, "before any god was formed I existed." The form of expression might be derived from the Babylonian cosmology, according to which the gods were the first beings to emerge from the primeval chaos. The following words occur in the Chaldean account of creation: "When of the gods none had yet arisen, when none named a name or [determined] fate; *then were the [great] gods formed*" (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions* on Gen. i. 1). It is probably to this origin of the gods themselves that reference is made, rather than to the formation of their images (ch. xliv. 9).

11. *I, even I, am the LORD*] **I, I am Jehovah**; see on ch. xlii. 8.
there is no saviour] See on v. 3.

12. *have declared...saved...shewed*] The arrangement of the verbs is peculiar. Some would remove the second, others the third, as dittography. But if there be any error in the text it is more likely the omission of a fourth word, which would be parallel to "saved," as "shewed" is to "declared" (so Duhm).

when there was no strange god] Rather as R.V. and **there was no strange** (i.e. foreign) god. There cannot be an allusion to an early period of the history, before idolatry had crept in; because the deliverance is conceived as having just taken place. It is true that many "strange gods" had been acknowledged in Israel; but none of them was really there, as a living active presence in their midst. The meaning is, "It was I who did this, and no god who was a stranger among you." *strange god* is strictly "stranger," as in Deut. xxxii. 16; Jer. ii. 25, iii. 13.

therefore ye are...that I am God] Render: **and ye are my witnesses, and I am God.**

13. *Yea, before the day was*] The correct translation is that of R.V. marg.: **Yea, from this day forth** (for all the future) **I am the same**

And *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand :
I will work, and who shall let it?

- 14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One
of Israel ;
For your sake I have sent to Babylon,
And have brought down all their nobles,
And the Chaldeans, whose cry *is* in the ships.
15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
The creator of Israel, your King.

(xli. 4) ; the deliverance marking a new era in Jehovah's manifestation of Himself as God, the only God who is a Saviour (v. 11).

I will work...let it?] Better: **I work, and who shall reverse it?**

14, 15. A new section (14—21) commences here with a brief but explicit announcement of the fall of Babylon.

the LORD, your redeemer] See on ch. xli. 14.

I have sent (or perhaps, **I will send**) *to Babylon*] As object of the verb we must supply, the Persian army, the "consecrated ones" of ch. xiii. 3.

and have brought...ships] This sentence is somewhat peculiar in its structure and phraseology, and many emendations have been proposed. Accepting the text as it stands, the best translation is no doubt that of R.V. and **I will bring down all of them as fugitives, even the Chaldeans in the ships of their rejoicing.** Since the verb "bring down" cannot be understood in two different senses in the two members, the idea must be that they shall all be sent down the Euphrates as fugitives in ships, which was precisely the manner in which Merodach-baladan made his escape from Sennacherib (see Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, E. T. vol. II. p. 36). A description of the ships on the Euphrates is to be found in Herod. i. 194; they are here called "ships of rejoicing" as having formerly been used for pleasure. The rendering, however, is altogether unsatisfying. The "and" before "Chaldeans" seems to make a distinction between them and the fugitives, which is hardly to be explained by supposing that the latter are the foreign merchants referred to in ch. xiii. 14. The probability is that the difficulties are due to somewhat extensive omissions in the text. The word for "fugitives" might (with the change of one vowel) be read as "bolts," and this is taken by A.V., though without any justification, as a metaphor for "nobles." It might, however, be a metaphor for the defences of Babylon, or a symbol of Israel's captivity; "I will bring down the bolts" gives a good enough sense so far as it goes. Another slight lamentation which naturally suggests itself is to change "ships" into "lamentations": "and the shouting of the Chaldeans into lamentations."

16—21. The sequel to the overthrow of Babylon is the deliverance of Israel, the method of which is compared with the greatest miracle in Israel's past history, the exodus from Egypt.

Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, 16
 And a path in the mighty waters;
 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army 17
 and the power;
 They shall lie down together, they shall not rise:
 They are extinct, they are quenched as tow.
 Remember ye not the former *things*, 18
 Neither consider the *things* of old.
 Behold, I will do a new *thing*; 19
 Now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it?

16. *Thus saith the LORD*] The oracle itself begins at v. 18; it is prefaced in vv. 16 f. by a vivid description of the mighty power of Jehovah, as illustrated once for all at the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. f.).

in the mighty waters] Cf. Neh. ix. 11.

17. *which bringeth forth*] i.e. allows them to come forth to their destruction (cf. Ez. xxxviii. 4, where the same expression is used with regard to the expedition of Gog, king of Magog). The next words should be rendered simply *chariot and horse* (without art.).

the army and the power] Perhaps: *army and warrior*. The second word is found elsewhere only in Ps. xxiv. 8 (A.V. "mighty") in apposition with the common word for "hero." Here it may be used collectively.

they shall lie down] Better: *they lie down*.

quenched as tow] *extinguished like a wick*; the same words as in ch. xlii. 3. The alternation of tenses in the original is noteworthy and very graphic. The participial construction first gives place to the descriptive impf., and this again to two perfects of completed action.

18. Great as the wonders of the exodus were they shall be far surpassed by that which Jehovah is about to do. The verse resumes the opening clause of v. 16.

Remember ye not...] Cf. Jer. xvi. 14 f., xxiii. 7 f. It is not meant of course that the exodus shall be actually forgotten (see ch. xlvi. 9), but only that it shall no longer be the supreme instance of Jehovah's redeeming power.

former things...things of old] Cf. ch. xlvi. 9. Obviously the expression "former things," so often used of past events predicted, here includes the remote incidents of the deliverance from Egypt.

19. The making of the way through the desert and water for the pilgrims to drink (see on ch. xl. 3 f., xli. 18 ff.) is considered to be a miracle transcending the passage of the Red Sea, and all the miracles which attended the first exodus. This is the *new thing* on which the prophet's mind fastens as the symbol of Israel's deliverance.

now it shall &c.] Rather: *even now it is springing forth; do ye not recognise it?* In ch. xlii. 9, the new things are spoken of as announced *before* they "spring forth," while as yet there is no sign of

I will even make a way in the wilderness,
And rivers in the desert.

- 20 The beast of the field shall honour me,
 The dragons and the owls:
 Because I give waters in the wilderness,
And rivers in the desert,
 To give drink to my people, my chosen.
 21 This people have I formed for myself;
 They shall shew forth my praise.

their appearing; here to the lively imagination of the prophet they are already seen "germinating," and he calls on the people to see them as the inevitable issue of the conquests of Cyrus. But while the above seems the most effective rendering of the question, that of the E.V. is quite possible:—"shall ye not experience it."

the desert] Heb. *Jēshimôn*, an utterly barren and arid region (Deut. xxxii. 10; Ps. lxxviii. 7, lxxviii. 40, cvii. 4 &c.) as distinguished from *midbār* ("wilderness" or "steppe"), where flocks can find a scanty sustenance. It occurs as a proper name in Num. xxi. 20 (1 Sam. xxvi. 1). See G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* pp. 312 ff.

20. Even the wild beasts shall honour Jehovah, unconsciously, through their joy at the abundant supply of water.

the dragons and the owls] Render as R.V. *the jackals and the ostriches*. See on ch. xiii. 21, 22.

21. The verse supplies an apposition to "my people" of v. 20. It reads: **The people which I have formed for myself, they shall tell forth my praise.** As the "streams in the desert" were created for Israel and not for the "beasts of the field," so it is Israel alone that can fully celebrate the praises of the Lord, Who is its Redeemer (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 9).

22—28. Jehovah effects this deliverance for His own sake, not in return for any service He has received at the hands of Israel. The argument of the section is difficult to follow, especially in the part which speaks of sacrifice. Two questions present themselves: (a) does Jehovah upbraid His people with *their neglect* of ritual, or does He assert *His own indifference* to it? and (b), is the reference to the whole course of Israel's history or merely to the period of the Exile? The answer to (b) seems determined by the consideration that if understood of the history as a whole the statement is inconsistent with fact. Although the prophet undoubtedly takes a dark view of Israel's past religious condition (v. 27), we cannot suppose that he charges it with disregard of the externals of religion. Whatever faults Israel had been guilty of, it had not been slack in the performance of ritual (see ch. i. 10 ff.). Now if we limit the reference to the Exile, the idea of an implied reproach (a) must be abandoned, because the suspension of the sacrificial system was in the circumstances inevitable. In other words, the main thought here is expressed in the second half of v. 23

But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob ;

But thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy
burnt offerings ;

Neither hast thou honoured me *with* thy sacrifices.

I have not caused thee to serve with an offering,

22

more clearly than in the first halves of vv. 23 and 24. At the same time this hardly amounts to a repudiation of sacrifice *in principle* on the part of Jehovah. The truth appears to be that the prophet directs attention to the simple fact that during the Exile sacrifice had not been offered ; whether Israel was to blame for this or not is immaterial to his argument. He has in his view the prevailing ideas of the time as to the normal attitude of a people to its God ; and he shews how inadequate these are to explain Jehovah's relation to Israel. The natural and proper thing was for a nation to invoke the name of its God, and to honour Him with costly and laborious rites. Israel has done none of these things, it has only burdened Jehovah with its sins ; yet Jehovah proves Himself to be its God by forgiving its iniquities and undertaking its cause against its enemies.

22. *But thou hast not called upon me*] To call upon Jehovah "in the day of trouble" was the first and most obvious duty of Israel (Ps. 1. 15), but this duty Israel has neglected. The statement is of course general ; it does not exclude the existence of a believing minority which poured out its heart in prayer to God. The position of the word "me" is emphatic in the original ; but the emphasis on the object throws a corresponding emphasis on the subject : "But not upon *me* hast thou called, Jacob" ; it is I who have called thee (ch. xli. 9, xlii. 6, xliii. 1 &c.). It is foreign to the context to suppose an antithesis between Jehovah and other gods.

but thou hast been weary of me] Or, perhaps : **much less hast thou wearied thyself about me** (Cheyne). The translation of E.V. is possible, although the expression is not elsewhere used of being weary of a person. The other sense, however, is much to be preferred because of v. 23 *b*, and is justified by the analogy of ch. xlvii. 12, 15, lxii. 8 ; Josh. xxiv. 13. The use of the conjunction is peculiar ; the simple *kî* seems to have the same force as the fuller '*aph kî*' (as in 1 Ki. viii. 27, "much less this house" &c.). The easiest solution might be to suppose that the '*aph*' has been omitted, but this is not really necessary. How Israel might have "wearied itself about" Jehovah is explained in vv. 23 f.

23. The absence of sacrifice has not impaired the bond between Jehovah and His people. The thought presents a striking contrast to ch. i. 10 ff., a passage which was probably in the writer's mind.

the small cattle] The Heb. word serves as the noun of unity to the word for "flock" (i.e. sheep and goats). On *burnt-offerings, sacrifices and offering*, see on ch. i. 11, 13.

I have not caused thee to serve] "have not treated thee as a slave," by

Nor wearied thee with incense.

- 24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money,
Neither hast thou filled me *with* the fat of thy sacrifices:
But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins,
Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.
- 25 I, *even* I, *am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions
for mine own sake,
And will not remember thy sins.

exacting tribute. The statement might no doubt be understood absolutely, according to Jer. vii. 21 ff.; but it is perhaps sufficient to take it of the Exile, when the non-essential character of sacrifice was revealed by its enforced discontinuance (cf. Ps. li. 16).

incense] See ch. lx. 6; Jer. vi. 20. In both these passages incense is described as coming from Arabia, which agrees with the statement of Pliny, that it was collected in the chief city of Hadramaut and thence conveyed to Syria. The Heb. word (*lēbônāh*), which is preserved in the Gr. λιβανος, λιβανωτός, is quite different from that found in ch. i. 13.

24. *sweet cane*] (*qāneh*) is also mentioned in Jer. vi. 20 as coming from a "far country." It is supposed to be *calamus odoratus*, a product of India, but grown also in Arabia and Syria; hence Jarchi, the Jewish commentator, explains: "because there was enough in Palestine"! It formed an ingredient in the sacred oil with which the priests, the tabernacle, &c. were anointed (Ex. xxx. 23, E.V. "sweet calamus"). One of the rare paronomasias in this prophecy is the play of words between this name and the verb for "buy" (*qānāh*).

filled me] *satiated me* (as R.V. marg.).

with the fat] cf. Jer. xxxi. 14; Ps. xxxvi. 8.

but (only) thou hast made me to serve...] This is the contrast which the prophet has had in view from the beginning of the section: while Jehovah has not burdened His people even with the offerings which it had been too ready to bring, it has burdened Him with its sins; and while Israel has taken its whole relation to Jehovah lightly, He has accepted the burden, and laboured in its service for the removal of its guilt.

25. Since Israel has neither brought sacrifices, nor even offered prayer acceptable to Jehovah, He himself must take the initiative in the work of redemption, blotting out its transgressions "for his own sake." In accordance with O.T. analogies, the act of forgiveness is described simply as "not remembering" sin; but the actual working out of forgiveness in history calls into exercise the resources of Omnipotence; it includes all Jehovah's dealings with His people, His handing them over to the dominion of the heathen (v. 28), and saving them again in His marvellous providence. The verse, moreover, contains only one half of the prophet's teaching about forgiveness; the other half is the process by which the people are brought to repentance, and this is the work of the Servant of the Lord, as described in ch. liii.

Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: 26
 Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.
 Thy first father hath sinned, 27
 And thy teachers have transgressed against me.
 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, 28
 And have given Jacob to the curse,
 And Israel to reproaches.

Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; 44
 And Israel, whom I have chosen:
 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, 2
 And formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee;

26. In order to bring home the charge of guilt (*v.* 24) Jehovah summons the people to debate their cause with Him. As *vv.* 23—25 recall *ch.* i. 10 ff., so this verse seems to be suggested by *v.* 18 of that chapter.

Put me in remembrance] i.e. “of any merits thou canst claim, or any plea thou canst urge, and which I have overlooked.”

let us plead together] “let us implead one another,” as in i. 18, though the verb is different.

declare thou] Rather reckon thou up (*Ps.* xl. 5).

mayest be justified] **mayest be in the right.**

27. *Thy first father*] Undoubtedly Jacob, the eponymous hero of the nation, is meant (*cf.* *Hos.* xii. 3 f.), not Abraham (who is never spoken of in the later literature as sinful), nor the earliest ancestors collectively; still less Adam.

thy teachers] Lit. as R.V. **thine interpreters** (*Gen.* xlii. 23), and hence “mediators” (as *Job* xxxiii. 23; 2 *Chr.* xxxii. 31); used of the prophets only here. On the idea, see *Jer.* xxiii. 11 ff. If the representative ancestor and the spiritual leaders of Israel were such, what must the mass of the nation have been!

28. *Therefore I have profaned*] is better than R.V. “Therefore I will profane,” although it requires the change of a vowel. The verb (like the one following) is pointed as a cohortative, and as this appears sometimes to express the idea of compulsion (see *Driver, Tenses*, §§ 51—53) we may perhaps venture to render: **and so I had to profane.**

the princes of the sanctuary] Better: **consecrated princes.** The priests are so named in 1 *Chr.* xxiv. 5; it is doubtful whether here priests or kings or both are meant, the consecration by anointing being common to both.

and have given...curse] Render: **and had to deliver** (see on last clause) **Jacob to the ban.** R.V. changes the translation for the worse.

xliv. 1—5. Once more the gloom of the present is lighted up by the promise of a brilliant future; the Divine spirit shall be poured out on Israel, and strangers shall esteem it an honour to attach themselves to the people of Jehovah.

1. *Yet now*] **But now**; marking the contrast, exactly as in *ch.* xliii. 1.

2. *formed thee from the womb*] See *v.* 24, *ch.* xlix. 5.

- Fear not, O Jacob, my servant;
 And *thou*, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
 3 For I will pour water upon *him that is* thirsty,
 And floods upon the dry ground:
 I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,
 And my blessing upon thine offspring:
 4 And they shall spring up *as* among the grass,
 As willows by the water courses.

Jeshurun occurs again only in Deut. xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 5, 26; always as a synonym for Israel and a title of honour (hardly a diminutive, as the termination might suggest). It means the "Upright One," being formed from an adj. *yāshār*, which is applied to Israel in Num. xxiii. 10, and perhaps also in the phrase "book of Jashar" (see Josh. x. 13, R. V.). The history of the name is, however, altogether obscure. The opinion that it was coined in opposition to Jacob ("the supplanter") has little to recommend it; although that antithesis may have led to its selection by this prophet.

Should the recent supposed discovery of the name Israel on an Egyptian monument of the reign of Merenptah be confirmed, it is possible that fresh light may be thrown on the relation of the two names Israel and Jeshurun. The form in which the word there appears is said to be *Yishir'il*, the sibilant agreeing with Jeshurun but differing from the traditional pronunciation of *Yisrā'el*. *Yishir'il* and *Yeshūrān* might be derivations from a common root, *yāshar*. (Brandt, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1896, p. 511; cf. Renan, *Hist. du peuple d'Israël*, Vol. I., p. 106).

3. On the first half of the verse see ch. xli. 17 ff. Here, however, a figurative sense predominates, as is shewn by what follows. The "spirit" is the agent both of physical and moral regeneration, as in ch. xxxii. 15 (cf. Ez. xxxvii. 11—14); the former idea being prominent; hence the parallelism "spirit"—"blessing," the former being the cause, the latter the effect. On the figure of water for the spirit, cf. John i. 33 etc. *seed* and *offspring* are individual Israelites.

4. *spring up as among the grass*] R.V., more accurately, omits "as"; but the text is unquestionably corrupt. There is no doubt that the LXX. preserves the true reading: **spring up as grass among the waters**. (Instead of the impossible *בבן הציר*, read *כבני מים הציר*.)

willows] or *poplars*; see on ch. xv. 7.

5. The result of the Divine blessing manifested in Israel's restoration will be that foreigners shall attach themselves as proselytes to the Jewish community. The promise therefore goes far beyond ch. xliii. 5—7. It is perhaps barely possible (with Dillmann) to understand this verse also of Israelites by birth, in the sense that they shall esteem it an honour to belong to their own nation; but this is certainly unnatural and scarcely to be reconciled with the second and fourth members of the verse.

One shall say, I *am* the LORD's; 5
 And another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob;
 And another shall subscribe *with* his hand unto the
 LORD,
 And surname *himself* by the name of Israel.

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, 6

call himself by the name of Jacob] The words, strictly rendered, would mean "call on the name of Jacob." It simplifies the construction greatly if, with Duhm, we vocalize this verb (as well as the last verb of the verse) as a passive:—"shall be called" etc.

subscribe with his hand unto the LORD] Rather: **inscribe his hand 'To Jehovah.'** The allusion is to the practice of branding slaves with the name of their owner, or perhaps to the religious custom of tattooing sacred marks on the person (Lev. xix. 28). See Ezek. ix. 4; Gal. vi. 17; Rev. vii. 3, xiii. 16.

surname himself (or better **be surnamed**, see above) *by the name of Israel*] The verb is connected etymologically with an Arabic word *kunya*, although it is used here in a wider sense. The *kunya* is a sort of household name, which consists in designating a man as the father of a particular child; thus in *Nimmer ibn Koblân Abû Faris* (N., son of K., father of F.) the last title is the *kunya*. (Seetzen, *Reisen*, Vol. II., p. 327.) Besides this, however, the Arabs make great use of honorific titles, like *Nûr-eddîn* ("Light of the Religion") etc.; and it is in a sense corresponding to this that the Heb. verb is always used; cf. ch. xlv. 4 and esp. Job xxxii. 21 f. (A.V. "give flattering titles"). The meaning, therefore, is that in addition to their personal names the proselytes will adopt the name of Israel as a title of honour. Cf. Ps. lxxxvii. 4 f.

CH. XLIV. 6—23. THE REALITY OF JEHOVAH'S GODHEAD, EVINCED BY HIS PREDICTIONS, AND CONTRASTED WITH THE MANIFOLD ABSURDITIES OF IDOLATRY.

The passage, which is merely a restatement of ideas already expressed, consists of three divisions:

i. vv. 6—8. A re-assertion and demonstration of the eternity and sole Divinity of Jehovah.

ii. vv. 9—20. A fresh exposure—the most complete and remorseless that the book contains—of the irrationality of idol-worship.

iii. vv. 21—23. An exhortation to the exiles to lay these truths to heart, and cleave to the God who forgives their sins and who alone can deliver. v. 23 is a lyrical effusion, such as the thought of the redemption frequently calls forth from the prophet.

6—8. There is no God but Jehovah and Israel is His witness: this is the substance of the verses, and the proof is the familiar one from prophecy.

the King of Israel] See on ch. xli. 21.

And his redeemer the LORD of hosts;

I *am* the first, and I *am* the last;

And besides me *there is* no God.

And who, as I, shall call,

And shall declare it, and set it in order for me,

Since I appointed the ancient people?

And the *things* that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

the LORD of hosts] this solemn appellation (see on ch. i. 9) occurs here for the first time in this prophecy (cf. ch. xlv. 13, xlvii. 4, xlviii. 2, li. 15, liv. 5).

I am the first and I am the last] So ch. xlviii. 12; see on xli. 4, and cf. Rev. i. 8, 17, xxii. 13. *besides me there is no God*] a fuller expression of monotheism than ch. xliii. 10.

7. The proof of v. 6 is found in the incontestable fact of prophecy (as ch. xli. 22 ff., xliii. 9, 12; &c.). The verse as translated in A.V. and R.V. reads very awkwardly; it would have to be paraphrased thus: "And which of the other gods shall call etc., as I have done since I appointed the ancient people?" But the distance of the last clause from the "as I" on which it depends is so great as to make the construction unnatural. It is better, with most commentators, to suppose a parenthesis, and render thus: "And who, as I, proclaims (and let him declare it and set it in order before me) since I founded the people of antiquity?" But a parenthesis is always more or less suspicious in a Hebrew sentence, and this one is doubly so on account of the "and" which introduces it. The LXX. reads, "And who is like me? *Let him stand* and proclaim &c." The additional verb ("stand") is likely to be original, and the construction of the first part of the clause is faultless. The only difficulty is presented by the temporal clause, "since I appointed" etc., on which see below.

call] means *proclaim* or "prophecy," as in ch. xl. 6.

set [it] in order] used of the arrangement of discourse, as Job xxxii. 14; Ps. l. 21, v. 3.

since I appointed the...] Better: "since I founded the people of antiquity." The most probable meaning is that prophecy has been continuous during the long period since Israel was formed into a nation. Some take the expression to denote the earliest population of the world (cf. ch. xli. 4); but this is less likely. Ewald applies it to Israel, but in the sense "everlasting people." In Ez. xxvi. 20 the same phrase is used of the shades in the underworld.

Several difficulties in the verse are got rid of by an attractive emendation of Oort (followed by Duhm), which makes this clause read; "who hath announced from of old?" (מִי הַשְׁמִיעַ מֵעוֹלָם instead of מִשְׁמִי עַם-עוֹלָם; cf. ch. xlv. 21). The whole verse would then be rendered: And who is like me? Let him stand and proclaim, and declare it and set in order to me. Who hath announced from of old future things? and things to come let them declare.

Fear ye not, neither be afraid :
 Have not I told thee from that time,
 And have declared *it?* ye *are* even my witnesses.
 Is there a God besides me?
 Yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*.
 They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; 9
 And their delectable *things* shall not profit;
 And they *are* their own witnesses;

things that are coming and *that shall come* are equivalent expressions; there is no foundation for Delitzsch's notion that the former denotes the future in general, and the latter the immediate future (see on ch. xli. 22).

8. *Fear ye not*] in the coming convulsions; the ground of confidence is that Jehovah has proved His control over these events by foretelling them. The verb for *be afraid* does not occur elsewhere.

from that time] Rather beforehand, or, from of old; as ch. xlv. 21, xlvi. 3, 5, 7.

and ye are my witnesses (R.V.)] Cf. ch. xliii. 10, 12.

no God] *no Rock*, as R.V. Cf. Deut. xxxii. 4, etc.

9—20. The course of thought is as follows:

(1) The makers of images are themselves frail men, and the gods they fashion cannot profit them (9—11).

(2) The process of manufacture is then described in minute detail, shewing what an expenditure of human strength and contrivance is involved in the production of these useless deities (12 f.).

(3) Nay, the very material of which they may be composed is selected at haphazard from the trees of the forest, and might just as readily have been applied to cook the idolater's food (14—17).

(4) Finally, with incisive and relentless logic, the writer exposes the strange infatuation which renders the idolater incapable of applying the most rudimentary principles of reason to his own actions (18—20).

9—11. The argument opens with the assertion of the nothingness alike of the idol and its makers. Fear on the part of Israel would be justified if other gods besides Jehovah had any power to influence the course of history.

a graven image] for "image" in general, as ch. xl. 19. The writer assumes that the god is the image and nothing more; since the image is plainly the work of human hands, the god cannot be greater than men or able to save them. This of course is directly opposed to the fundamental assumption of the idolaters themselves, who distinguished between the image and the divinity represented by it (see on v. 11).

vanity] lit. "chaos," as in xl. 17, xli. 29.

their delectable things] "the objects in which they delight," i.e. the idols.

and they are their own witnesses] R.V. "and their own witnesses see not," etc. Render simply: **and their witnesses**; their devotees, see ch. xliii. 9. The pronoun which suggests the "own" of A.V. and R.V. is marked by the so-called *puncta extraordinaria* as suspicious, and is

- They see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.
 10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image
That is profitable for nothing?
 11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed:
 And the workmen, they *are* of men:
 Let them all be gathered together, let them stand *up*;
Yet they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together.
 12 The smith *with* the tongs both worketh in the coals,
 And fashioneth it with hammers,
 And worketh it with the strength of his arms:

therefore unaccented. If it is retained in the text (as it may very well be) the better translation is, "and as for their witnesses, they see not" &c.

that they may be ashamed] The consequence of their ignorance expressed as a purpose.

10. *Who hath formed, &c.*] A rhetorical question: who has been such a fool? On *molten a graven image* see ch. xl. 19.

11. *all his fellows*] The word denotes the members of a guild, and is understood by A.V. of the gang of craftsmen employed in the making of the idol. It should rather be interpreted as the "adherents," the *clientèle* of the false god himself, as in R.V. marg., "all that join themselves thereto." Cf. Hos. iv. 17 ("associated with idols") and 1 Cor. x. 20.

are of men] belong to the category of men (xl. 17), and how can men produce a god? Duhm, changing the vowel-points, renders: "Behold all the spells (cf. ch. xlvii. 9, 12) are put to shame, and as for enchantments (cf. ch. iii. 3), they are of men;" an allusion to the magical process by which, in all systems of idolatry, the manufactured image is transformed into a fetish, the residence of a divinity. Similarly Cheyne (*Introd.* p. 301).

12, 13. This truth enforced by a description of the manufacture of the idols.

The smith] lit. "the workman in iron," as opposed to the "workman in wood" of the next verse. The text is corrupt at the beginning. R.V. has "the smith (maketh) an axe"; LXX. "the workman sharpeneth iron, worketh it with the adze &c.," not perceiving that the verse speaks of the *blacksmith's* labours. It is possible, no doubt, to take the word for "axe" (which is found again only in Jer. x. 3), as meaning "cutting instrument," for dividing the mass of iron on the anvil; but this is suggested by nothing in the verse; and moreover, the description is certainly not that of the manufacture of an implement, whether for the smith or the carpenter. The only feasible solution is to omit the "axe" altogether as a marginal gloss by some reader who fell into the same error as the LXX. translator. Render: **The smith works with the coals.**

fashioneth it (the iron core of the idol) *with hammers*] cf. ch. xli. 7.

and worketh it with his strong arm] R.V. Gesenius cites in illustration two lines of Vergil (*Georg.* iv. 174 f.),

Yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth :
 He drinketh no water, and is faint.
 The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule ; he marketh it ¹³
 out with a line ;
 He fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with
 the compass,
 And maketh it after the figure of a man, according to
 the beauty of a man ;
 That it may remain *in* the house.
He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress ¹⁴
 and the oak,
 Which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees
 of the forest :
 He planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*.
 Then shall it be for a man to burn :

15

“ Illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt
 In numerum, versantque tenaci forcipe ferrum.”

yea, he is hungry...] The point is that the man who makes his own gods exhausts his strength in the process ; contrast ch. xl. 31.

13. *The carpenter*] lit., “ the workman in wood.”

stretcheth out a line, (R.V.)] to mark off the dimensions of the future image on the block of wood. For *line* in the next clause read **pencil** (as R.V.) ; the word, like that for “ planes ” (which may mean “ chisels ” or any cutting implement), occurs only here.

fitteth] R.V. “ shapeth ” ; lit. **maketh**.

that it may remain in the house] **to dwell in a house** ; either a great temple, or a private shrine.

14—17. The writer now goes back to the material of which this second kind of idol is made.

He heweth] Perhaps [**He went**] **to hew** ; the anomalous construction in the Heb. is best explained by supposing the omission of the verb *hālak* before *likrōth* (so Marti).

strengtheneth for himself] It is impossible to assign any natural meaning to this clause. It is omitted in the LXX., which has a much simpler and on the whole a preferable text. The words *tirzāh* (cypress) and *’ōren* (ash) occur nowhere else in O.T. For the latter, which is written in some MSS. with a small final ך and in others with ך, the LXX. seems to have read *’ēl*, which gives a very apt turn to the last sentence : **which God planted, and the rain nourished**.

15, 16. Cf. Wisd. Sol. xiii. 11—13, and (with Lowth) Hor. *Sat.* i. 8, 1 ff.:

“ Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum,
 Cum faber, incertus, scamnum faceretne Priapum,
 Maluit esse Deum.”

- For he will take thereof, and warm himself;
 Yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread;
 Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*;
 He maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.
 16 He burneth part thereof in the fire;
 With part thereof he eateth flesh;
 He roasteth roast, and is satisfied:
 Yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha,
 I am warm, I have seen the fire:
 17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his
 graven image:
 He falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and
 prayeth unto it,
 And saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god.
 18 They have not known nor understood:
 For he hath shut their eyes, that *they* cannot see;
 And their hearts, that *they* cannot understand.
 19 And none considereth in his heart,
 Neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say,
 I have burnt part of it in the fire;
 Yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof;
 I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*:
 And shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?
 Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?
 20 He feedeth on ashes:

The word rendered "falleth down (*sāgad*)" is an Aramaic verb meaning "worship," recurring in the O.T. only vv. 17, 19 and ch. xlv. 6. It is the root of the Arabic word *mosque* (*musğid*).

16. *part thereof*] lit. "half thereof," as opposed to "the residue thereof" in v. 17. Cf. v. 19, "upon the coals thereof."

18—20. But such is the infatuation of idolatry, that its blinded votaries never pause to reflect on their actions; the idolater has not sense enough to say to himself in plain words what he has done.

They have not...understood] Better, as R.V. **they know not, neither do they consider.** *he hath shut their eyes*] Rather: **their eyes are besmeared**, as it were plastered over, so that they cannot see (a different verb, however, from that used by Isaiah in vi. 10, &c.).

19. *considereth in his heart*] R.V. **calleth to mind**; lit. "bringeth it back to his heart," i.e. "recalls in thought," a somewhat rare expression (see ch. xlv. 8; Deut. iv. 39, xxx. 1; 1 Ki. viii. 47).

part of it] See on v. 16. The word rendered *stock* occurs again only in Job xl. 20, where it seems to mean "produce."

20. *He feedeth on ashes*] lit., "a shepherd of ashes". Duhm rather

A deceived heart hath turned him aside,
That he cannot deliver his soul, nor say,
Is there not a lie in my right hand?
Remember these, O Jacob 21
And Israel; for thou *art* my servant:
I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant:
O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.
I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, 22
And, as a cloud, thy sins:
Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it*: 23
Shout, ye lower parts of the earth:

fancifully suggests that the image may be that of a man trying to feed his flock on a pasture that has been reduced to ashes: "A shepherd of (or on) ashes is he whom a deceived heart hath turned aside" (from the ways of reason). A safer rendering is: "One who finds satisfaction in ashes is he whom, &c." For this (Aram.) sense of the verb *râ'âh* see Hos. xii. 1 (?); Ps. xxxvii. 3; Prov. xv. 14, &c. (Gesenius, *Lexicon*¹², *sub verbo*).

and he shall not deliver his soul] Cf. v. 17.

Is there *not a lie*...] Am I not cleaving to that which will disappoint my hope?

21, 22. An admonition to Israel to lay these truths to heart and realise its special relation to the one living and true God.

Remember these] i.e. these things (R.V.), the principles enforced in the preceding passage.

thou shalt not be forgotten of me] The Heb. construction, a passive verb with accusative suffix, is abnormal. All the ancient versions and many commentators render "thou shalt (or wilt) not forget me"; but this is hardly defensible. The suffix must denote the indirect obj. (dative) as is sometimes the case with intransitive verbs. (See Davidson, *Synt.* § 73 R. 4.) For the sense, cf. ch. xl. 27, xlix. 14 ff.

22. Cf. ch. xliii. 25. "The sense of being forgotten of God is produced by the consciousness of guilt; hence the promise of forgiveness is here repeated" (Dillmann).

as a thick cloud...as a cloud] An image of transitoriness; Hos. vi. 4, xiii. 3; Job vii. 9, xxx. 15.

23. The prophet in a transport of joy calls on heaven and earth to celebrate the wonders of Israel's redemption. Cf. ch. xlii. 10—13, xlv. 8. The poetic outburst marks the end of the section.

the LORD hath done it] The redemption is already as good as complete; see the end of the verse.

ye lower parts of the earth] or depths of the earth, the antithesis to "ye heavens."

Break forth *into* singing, ye mountains,
 O forest, and every tree therein :
 For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob,
 And glorified himself in Israel.

break forth into singing] Cf. ch. xiv. 7.
and glorified] R. V., more correctly : *and will glorify*. Cf. ch. xlix. 3,
 lx. 21, lxi. 3.

CH. XLIV. 24—XLV. 25. JEHOVAH'S COMMISSION TO CYRUS,
 HIS ANOINTED, WHOSE VICTORIES SHALL BRING ABOUT THE
 UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION OF THE TRUE GOD.

The distinctive feature of this important section of the book is the prominence given to the person and work of the Persian conqueror, Cyrus. The leading idea is no longer the relation of Israel to Jehovah, but the glorious effects that are to follow its deliverance through the agency of this divinely chosen hero. In the earlier allusions to Cyrus (ch. xli. 1—4, 25—29) he is spoken of as one whose remarkable career has challenged the attention of the world and illustrated the inability of the heathen religions to deal with the great crises of history. There have been abundant intimations that he is the destined instrument of Israel's restoration, but these have hitherto occupied a secondary place in the prophet's thoughts. Here, however, the figure of Cyrus is brought prominently on the scene, he is addressed directly and by name, and the ultimate scope of his mission is clearly unfolded. He is to set the exiles free, to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple ; and the far-reaching moral result of his singular generosity to Israel will be the downfall of heathenism everywhere and the universal conviction that Jehovah is the only God who is a Deliverer. There are five divisions :

i. ch. xliv. 24—28 is an introduction to the central passage, which immediately follows. Jehovah, still addressing Israel, describes Himself by a majestic series of attributes, gradually converging from the thought of His creative power to the particular point which is the subject of the present discourse, His selection of Cyrus as the instrument of His purpose.

ii. ch. xlv. 1—8.—The Divine speaker now addresses Cyrus in person, promising to him an uninterrupted career of victory (1—3) ; yet it is in the interest of Israel that he, a stranger to the true God, is thus called and commissioned (4) ; and the final issue of his achievements will be a general recognition throughout the world of the sole Godhead of Jehovah (5—7).—The last verse (8) is a poetic interlude like ch. xlii. 10 ff., xlv. 23, &c.

iii. vv. 9—13.—Here the prophet turns aside to rebuke the murmurs of dissent which this novel announcement calls forth amongst his fellow countrymen (9—11). It would appear that there were some of the Israelites who rebelled against the thought of a foreign prince as the Anointed of Jehovah and the Saviour of Israel. The answer to these cavillers is an assertion of the absolute sovereignty of Jehovah, who

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer,
And he that formed thee from the womb,
I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*;
That stretcheth forth the heavens alone;
That spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;
That frustrateth the tokens of the liars,
And maketh diviners mad;
That turneth wise *men* backward,
And maketh their knowledge foolish;
That confirmeth the word of his servant,

24

25

26

reaffirms His choice of Cyrus as the instrument of Israel's deliverance (12, 13).

iv. vv. 14—17.—Transporting himself to the time when the Divine purpose shall be realised, the writer depicts the procession of conquered nations who do homage to Israel as the people of the true God, and, renouncing idolatry, acknowledge the hand of Jehovah in Israel's everlasting salvation.

v. vv. 18—25.—This deliverance of Israel culminates in salvation to the world at large. The passage contains some of the most striking thoughts in the whole prophecy. The character of Jehovah, His goodwill to men, is to be learned from His creation of a *habitable* world (18) and from the manner of His revelation to Israel (19). He has shewn Himself to be the only "righteous and saving God" (21); and the heathen are now invited to share in His salvation through faith in His sole divinity (20, 22). It is His irrevocable purpose thus to secure universal homage (23—25).

24—28. Jehovah, the God of creation and of prophecy, has chosen Cyrus to execute his purpose with regard to Israel.

thy redeemer] See on ch. xli. 14. *formed thee from the womb*] as in v. 2.

that stretcheth...alone] Cf. ch. xl. 22; xlii. 5; Job ix. 8.

by myself] The A.V. here follows the reading presupposed by the vowel-points (*Qêrê*). The R.V. rightly goes back to the consonantal text (*Kêlêhêb*) which is preserved in the LXX. and Vulg. and some Hebrew MSS. Render accordingly: **who was with me?** i.e. there was none to help me.

25, 26. The overthrow of heathen soothsaying and the establishment of true prophecy as it existed in Israel.

the tokens of the liars] Or, the **signs of the praters** (cf. Jer. l. 36, and see on ch. xvi. 6 where the word means "pratings"). The "signs" (see Deut. xiii. 1 f.) referred to are the omens on which the diviners based their forecasts of the future. How much reliance was placed on these prognostications by the Babylonians will be seen from ch. xlvii.

diviners] See on ch. iii. 2.

26. *That confirmeth*] is the antithesis to "that frustrateth" in v. 25. (Cf. Jer. xxix. 10, xxxiii. 14).

And performeth the counsel of his messengers;
That saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited;
And to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built,
And I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

27 That saith to the deep, Be dry,

And I will dry up thy rivers:

28 That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd,

And shall perform all my pleasure:

the word of his servant...the counsel of his messengers] are parallel expressions for the word of prophecy. The sing. "servant" presents some difficulty. That it is equivalent to "prophet" is clear from the context; but that a particular prophet, such as Jeremiah or the writer himself, is meant is extremely improbable. It might conceivably be used of the prophets collectively, or of Israel as the bearer of the prophetic word, but the parallelism with "messengers" in the next clause is opposed to both these interpretations. The word should probably be pointed as a plural,—*his servants*; which is the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus of the LXX.

performeth] Lit. *completeth*.

that saith &c.] *that saith of Jerusalem, Let her be inhabited; and of the cities of Judah, Let them be built.* At this point, as Delitzsch observes, the transition is made to special predictions bearing on the restoration of Israel.

decayed places] R.V. *waste places*, or ruins.

27. *the deep*] is a figure for the obstacles to the deliverance of Israel. It has been thought by some commentators (including Vitranga and Lowth) that the verse contains an allusion to the well-known stratagem by which Cyrus is said to have got possession of Babylon (Herodotus i. 185—191). The Hebrew word for "deep" might no doubt be applied to a river, as a cognate word is in Zech. x. 11. But the recently discovered Cyrus-inscriptions seem to shew that the narrative of Herodotus is legendary. See *Introd.* p. xviii.

28. The series of predicates here culminates in the mention by name of the conqueror of Babylon and liberator of Israel. The name Cyrus is in Persian *Kūrush*, in Babylonian *Kurash*, in Greek *Kūpos*. The traditional Hebrew pronunciation is *Kōresh*, but it is probable that the original form preserved the characteristic long *u* which appears in the other languages. On the career of Cyrus see *Introduction*, pp. xvii ff.

He is my shepherd] Or simply, *My Shepherd*. "Shepherd" here means "ruler" as in Jer. iii. 15; Ezek. xxxiv. *pass.*; Mic. v. 5: comp. the Homeric *ποιμῆνες λαῶν*. It is one of the honorific titles alluded to in ch. xlv. 4.

perform all my pleasure] Or, *complete all my purpose*; cf. ch. xlvi. 10, xlviii. 14, liii. 10. This use of the Heb. word for "pleasure" illustrates the transition to its later sense of "business" (ch. lviii. 3, 13) or "matter" (Eccl. v. 8, viii. 6). Comp. Arab. *shay'* (=thing) from *shā'a* (to will).

Even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;
 And to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.
 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
 Whose right hand I have holden,

45

even saying] If the text be right the meaning would probably be that Cyrus would accomplish Jehovah's purpose by giving the order for the rebuilding of the Temple &c. LXX. and Vulg. read "that saith," substituting a participle for the inf. of the Heb. In this case the subject is Jehovah, as throughout the passage.

Instead of *to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be...*, the Heb. has *of Jerusalem, Let her be....* See on v. 26.

According to Josephus (*Ant.* xi. i. 2) it was the reading of this verse that fired Cyrus with the ambition to restore the Jewish Temple and nationality. The statement, if true, would of course detract nothing from the significance of the prophecy. But it has no claim to be accepted, and would assuredly never have been made but for the assumption that the words were written by Isaiah "one hundred and forty years before the destruction of the Temple."

xlv. 1—7. The apostrophe to Cyrus expresses dramatically the purpose of Jehovah in raising up the Persian conqueror. The idea that the true God has made a personal revelation of Himself to the mind of Cyrus is not implied; Cyrus is to learn the religious significance of his mission from its results (v. 3), just as mankind at large comes to understand it (v. 6). There is a startling resemblance between some of the expressions here used of Jehovah's choice of Cyrus, and some of those employed by the Babylonian writer of the "Annalistic Tablet" in describing him as the favourite of Merodach. We read there that "Merodach...appointed a prince who should guide aright the wish of the heart which his hand upholds, even Cyrus..." that he "has proclaimed his title; for the sovereignty of all the world does he commemorate his name," and that he "beheld with joy the deeds of his vicegerent, who was righteous in hand and heart," and that "like a friend and comrade he went at his side." It is hardly probable, however, that the prophet imitates the official language of the inscriptions to gain the favour of Cyrus. (*Kittel, Zeitsch. f. alttest. Wiss.* 1898, 149 ff.)

to his anointed, to Cyrus] The Hebr. word for "anointed" (*māshîāh*), when used as a substantive, is almost confined to the kings of Israel; although in later times there was a tendency to employ it in a wider sense (e.g. of the Patriarchs in Ps. cv. 15, of the people in Hab. iii. 13). Unless Ps. ii. 2 be an exception it is never used in the O. T. of the future ideal king (the Messiah); hence the idea that the rôle of the Messianic king is by the prophet transferred to Cyrus is not to be entertained. The title simply designates him as one consecrated by Jehovah to be His agent and representative. This, however, is the only passage where the title is bestowed upon a foreign ruler; Nebuchadnezzar is called the "servant" of Jehovah (Jer. xxv. 9, xxvii. 6, xlii. 10), but the more august designation of "His Anointed" is reserved for one who as the Deliverer of Israel and the instrument of the overthrow of polytheism, stands in a

- To subdue nations before him;
 And I will loose the loins of kings,
 To open before him the two leaved gates;
 And the gates shall not be shut;
 2 I will go before thee,
 And make the crooked places straight:
 I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
 And cut in sunder the bars of iron:
 3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
 And hidden riches of secret places,
 That thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call
thee by thy name, *am* the God of Israel.

still closer relation to Jehovah's purpose. Comp. "My Shepherd" in ch. xlv. 28; also ch. xlv. 11, xlviii. 14.

to subdue &c.] Render: **to subdue before him nations, and to loose the loins of kings; to open before him doors, and that gates should not be shut;** the infinitive construction is resolved into the finite verb. To *loose* (lit. "open") is to ungird, or disarm; see 1 Ki. xx. 11, where the same verb forms the contrast to "gird."

2, 3. Speaking directly to His Anointed, Jehovah assures him of His continued support in the enterprise that still lies before him.

the crooked places] Lit. "protuberances" or, "swells." The original word (see on ch. lxiii. 1), which does not occur elsewhere as a noun, appears to mean "swollen" or "tumid"; and denotes "hills." Comp. Ovid *Amor.* II. 16. 51 ("tumidi subsidite montes") and Milton's

"So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
 Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep."
 (*Paradise Lost*, Bk. VII. 288.)

the gates (R.V. **doors**) *of brass*] Babylon had 100 gates "all of brass," according to the description of Herodotus (I. 179). Cf. Ps. cvii. 16.

3. *the treasures of darkness*] i.e. treasures hid in darkness. The following word rendered *hidden riches* (Heb. *matmôn*, held by some to be the original of the N.T. "Mammon"), means properly treasure *hidden* underground (Job iii. 21; Prov. ii. 4; Jer. xli. 8). The treasures referred to are chiefly the loot of Sardis, which Xenophon describes as "the richest city of Asia next to Babylon" (*Cyrop.* VII. 2. 11), and of Babylon itself (Jer. l. 37, li. 13). If, as is probable, the capture of the former city was past before the date of the prophecy, rumours of the fabulous wealth of Croesus, which then found its way into the coffers of Cyrus, may have reached the prophet.

that thou mayest know &c.] Render: **that thou mayest know that I Jehovah am He that calleth thee by name** (see on ch. xliii. 1), **the God of Israel.** The prophet apparently expects that Cyrus will come to acknowledge Jehovah as the true God and the author of his success

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, 4
I have even called thee by thy name:
I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, 5
There is no God besides me:
I girded thee though thou hast not known me:
That they may know from the rising of the sun, and 6
from the west,
That *there is* none besides me.
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else.
I form the light, and create darkness: 7

(see ch. xli. 25). Whether this hope was actually realised is more than ever doubtful since the discovery of cuneiform inscriptions in which Cyrus uses the language of crude polytheism (*Records of the Past*, Vol. v., pp. 167 f.). [Cf. Sayce, *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, pp. 507—511.] Many elements of the prophecy, such as the universal extinction of idolatry, remained unfulfilled, and it is possible that the anticipated conversion of Cyrus to the true faith is one of them (see Ryle's note on Ezra i. 2 in *Cambridge Bible for Schools*). The prophet nowhere explains the process by which this spiritual change is to be brought about, but he doubtless regards it as produced by the evidence of prophecy, so frequently dwelt upon in the first nine chapters of the book. The wonderful successes of Cyrus marked him out, to the mind of antiquity, as a favourite of the gods; but the further conviction that Jehovah alone is God proceeds from the knowledge that He alone has foretold his appearance.

4. The remainder of the section announces Jehovah's purpose in raising up Cyrus, which is twofold: (1) the liberation and exaltation of His Servant Israel (v. 4), and (2) that His Godhead may be acknowledged throughout the world (v. 6). These two motives are inseparable, since it is only through Israel that the character of Jehovah can be made known to the nations. Hence great as the mission of Cyrus is, he is still but the instrument, while Israel is the goal of the Divine activity (Duhm).

I have surnamed thee] i.e. bestowed on thee such honourable appellations as "My Shepherd," "My Anointed." See on ch. xliv. 5.

though thou hast not known me] Delitzsch and others somewhat strangely take this to mean "before thou hadst being." But the words present no difficulty in their natural sense, which is that Cyrus entered on his career of conquest ignorant of the true God who made his way prosperous.

5. *I gird thee*] the contrast to "loose the loins of kings" in v. 1.

6. The ultimate purpose of the conquest of Cyrus is the universal recognition of the truth asserted in v. 5, the sole divinity of Jehovah.

from the west] Lit. *from the going down thereof*. (On omission of *mappiq* see Davidson, *Grammar* § 19. R. c.)

I make peace, and create evil:

I the LORD do all these *things*.

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above,

And let the skies pour down righteousness:

Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation,

7. It has been very generally supposed that the expressions of this verse cover a polemic against the Zoroastrian dualism, with its eternal antagonism between Ahuramazda, the god of light and of goodness, and Ahriman, the god of darkness and evil. The prophet's language, however, is perfectly general, and it is hardly probable that he would have contented himself with a vague allusion to so important a controversy. And apart from the question whether Cyrus was a Zoroastrian in religion, it is doubtful whether a sharply formulated dualism was a prominent feature of Persian religion in his time. It is more likely therefore that the only dualism here referred to is the dualism latent in every polytheistic system, viz., the ascription of good and evil events to different classes of deities. The context shews that the writer is thinking of the effect of Jehovah's victory, not specially on Cyrus, but upon men in general; and the truth he asserts is simply that Jehovah as the only God is the disposer of all events, good and evil alike.

and create evil] i.e. not moral evil, but physical evil, calamity. Cf. Am. iii. 6, "shall evil befall a city and Jehovah hath not done it?" The prophet's words are startlingly bold, but they do not go beyond the common O. T. doctrine on the subject, which is free from the speculative difficulties that readily suggest themselves to the mind of a modern reader. There is no thought in the O.T. of reducing all evil, moral and physical, to a single principle. Moral evil proceeds from the will of man, physical evil from the will of God, who sends it as the punishment of sin. The expression "*create evil*" implies nothing more than that. It is true (as we see from the Book of Job &c.) that the *indiscriminateness* of physical calamities had begun to cause perplexity in the age to which the prophecy belongs. But the discussion of that question never shook either of the two positions, that sin originates in man, and that God is the author of calamity.

8. A lyrical effusion, called forth by the thought of the blessings that will follow the triumph of the true religion. The heavens are represented as showering down gracious influences, which fructify the earth and cause it to bring forth the fruits of salvation. For the figure of the verse, cf. ch. lv. 10; Hos. ii. 21 f.; Ps. lxxii. 6; and esp. Ps. lxxxv. 11 ("truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven").

Drop down] is a causative verb, the obj. being "righteousness" in the next line.

let them bring forth &c.] Rather: **let salvation and [...] spring forth; let her (the earth) cause righteousness to spring up.** The plural verb causes some difficulty. A.V. (and R.V.) appear to take heavens and earth as subj.; but this is hardly possible, first because they belong to

And let righteousness spring up together;
I the LORD have created it.

Woe unto him that striveth with his maker!

9

Let the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth.

Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it,

What makest thou?

Or thy work, He hath no hands?

Woe unto him that saith unto *his* father, What be-
gettest thou?

different distichs, and secondly, because the verb is always neuter (Deut. xxix. 17 is no exception). Perhaps a word has been omitted from the text.

Two words are here used for righteousness, that which comes down from heaven is *cedeq*, that which springs from the earth is *çēdāqāh*. The figure might suggest that *cedeq* is the cause of which *çēdāqāh* is the effect; the former being the divine "right" which establishes salvation &c., and the latter the human order which is an element of it. But any such distinction is precarious. *Salvation* (*yeshā'*) which ordinarily means "deliverance" appears here to be used in its wider sense of "welfare," like the kindred noun in Job xxx. 15 ("my welfare is passed away as a cloud"). See Introduction, p. xxviii n.

9—13. These verses are addressed to a section of the exiles who resisted the idea of deliverance through a foreign conqueror. The strong word "strive" and the emphatic reassertion of the mission of Cyrus (v. 13), as well as the connexion with vv. 1—8, shew that deliberate opposition to the Divine purpose, and not mere faint-hearted unbelief (as in chs. xl. 27, li. 13), is here referred to. We know too little of the circumstances to understand the precise state of mind from which the objection proceeded. It may have arisen from reluctance to entertain the idea of deliverance through a foreign conqueror, instead of through an Israelite king, as ancient prophecies seemed to promise (e.g., Jer. xxx. 21). The same tendency of thought is probably alluded to in ch. xlvi. 12 (the "stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness").

his maker] the same word as "him that fashioned it" in the second half of the verse. It is the ordinary word for "potter."

Let *the potsherd* strive &c.] Render as in R.V. a **potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!** or, "a potsherd like (no better than) an earthen potsherd." "With" may mean "among" (as a synonymous word does in Ps. lxi. 28), or "like" (Job ix. 26), but the use of the same preposition in two different senses in one sentence is no doubt harsh.

or thy work, He hath no hands] i.e. no power. Delitzsch instances an identical Arabic phrase (*lā yadai lahu* = "it is not in his power"). The LXX. reads "Thou" instead of "He," and several commentators have suggested a transposition of the suffixes in the original: "or his work, Thou hast no hands." The emendation is plausible, though perhaps hardly necessary.

- Or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?
 11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his maker,
 Ask me of *things* to come concerning my sons,
 And concerning the work of my hands command ye me.
 12 I have made the earth,
 And created man upon it:
 I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens,
 And all their host have I commanded.
 13 I have raised him up in righteousness,
 And I will direct all his ways:
 He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives,

10. The impropriety of contending with God exhibited in a still more repellent light. The words "his" and "the" are not expressed in Hebrew; simply "*a father*," "*a woman*." "The rudest and most outrageous intrusion into an unspeakably delicate and sacred relationship" (Delitzsch).

11. The last two verses were probably spoken by the prophet in his own name; here Jehovah addresses the same persons, introducing Himself as the *Holy One of Israel* (xli. 14) and *his maker* (v. 9). If the text be quite accurate, *ask me* must mean "ask me, but do not criticise me," and *command me* must mean "leave to my care" (as 1 Sam. xiii. 14, xxv. 30; 2 Sam. vi. 21, vii. 11). But Cheyne well observes that these parallels are not exact, the verb being used of a charge laid on an inferior by a superior; and it is doubtful if it could be suitably employed of committing anything to the charge of God. He supposes that by an easily explicable omission of a consonant an imperf. has been changed into an imper.; and his translation is perhaps more forcible than any that can be obtained from the received text: **concerning things to come** (xli. 23, xliv. 7) **will ye question** (i.e. "interrogate" in a hostile sense) **me? and concerning...the work of my hands will ye lay commands upon me?**

concerning my sons] should (according to the accents) be taken with what follows (as R.V.); but the phrase is irrelevant and should probably be omitted as a gloss based on v. 10.

12. Is introductory to v. 13; it is the Creator of all things who has destined Cyrus to be the emancipator of Israel.

I, even my hands] The "I" merely lends emphasis to the possessive: "*my hands, and not another's*."

all their host (the *stars*, not the angels, xl. 26) *have I commanded*] or, "ordained."

13. *I* (again emphatic) *have raised him* (Cyrus) *up in righteousness*] i.e. in accordance with a consistent, straightforward and right purpose (cf. ch. xlii. 6). Cf. also chs. xli. 2, 25, etc.

he (and no other) *shall build my city &c.*] See ch. xliv. 27 f.

Not for price nor reward,
Saith the LORD of hosts.

Thus saith the LORD,

The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,

Shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine:

They shall come after thee, in chains they shall come
over,

14

not for price nor reward] Lit. "not for hire and not for a bribe." These words remove a difficulty which would naturally suggest itself to the exiles: viz., that there was no conceivable motive that could induce Cyrus to espouse the cause of Israel. The divine answer is that he will do so from an inward impulse (*ὁρμή τις*, as Josephus expresses it) inspired by Jehovah. There is an apparent but no real contradiction between this assurance and the idea of ch. xliii. 3 f. The restoration of Israel is conceived as preceding the Persian conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia (v. 14); that is the reward subsequently given to Cyrus, but not the inducement on which he acted.

14—17. The collapse of the heathen religions is here dramatically represented under the image of a procession of conquered nations of Africa, who pass before Israel, as tributaries and slaves, acknowledging that Israel's God is the only true divinity. This seems to be the sense, but see below on v. 14.

14. The peoples mentioned are the same as those named in ch. xliii. 3 (see on the passage) as the "ransom" given for Israel. They are apparently represented here as already conquered by Cyrus, the vicegerent and anointed of Jehovah. It has even been supposed that Cyrus is the person addressed in the verse, but this is impossible because of the words "Surely in thee is God," which certainly could not be addressed to Cyrus. The commonly accepted interpretation that there is no thought of conquest in the passage, but only of spontaneous homage rendered to Israel by distant nations of the earth, is less natural. The idea that the "fetters" are self-imposed is a conceit not readily to be attributed to the prophet, and the whole scene strongly suggests a submission that has been preceded by humiliation and defeat. The meaning probably is that the treasures of the nations are made over to Israel by Cyrus, while the nations themselves recognise the exaltation of Israel as the goal of the Persian victories and worship Jehovah, as the only true God.

and the Sabæans, men of stature] (see on ch. xviii. 2.) Omit "of" with R.V.; the Sabæans offer not tribute, but their persons (as slaves).

shall come over unto thee] Rather: *shall pass before thee* (as 1 Ki. ix. 8; 2 Ki. iv. 9).

in chains they shall come over] *in fetters* (Nah. iii. 10; Ps. cxlix. 8) *shall they pass*. The word for *make supplication* is in every other instance used of prayer to God. Israel is recognised as the mediator between the true God and mankind.

- And they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*,
 Surely God *is* in thee;
 And *there is* none else, *there is* no God.
 15 Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself,
 O God of Israel, the saviour.
 16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them:
 They shall go to confusion together *that are* makers of idols.
 17 *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD *with* an everlasting salvation:

Surely God is in thee] In thee only is God. These of course are words of the Sabæans, &c. to Israel, expressing their acceptance of the true religion. Israel's God has proved Himself to be the God of history, the only God. The expression appears to be alluded to by St Paul in 1 Cor. xiv. 25 ("declaring that God is in you indeed").

15. Continuing the confession of the heathen. With a slight change of text, Cheyne renders: "Truly with thee (Israel) God hides Himself; the God of Israel is a Deliverer" (*Sacred Books of O.T.*).

a God that hidest thyself] The prophet would perhaps hardly have used this language in his own name (see v. 19). But to the nations of the world Jehovah had hitherto been a hidden deity; His power and glory had never been reflected in the fortunes of His own people. Now at length He is revealed in His true character, as a "Saviour" (or Deliverer) (see on ch. xliii. 3). Comp., however, ch. lv. 8 f.; Deut. xxix. 29; Prov. xxv. 2, for a sense in which Jehovah might be said to hide Himself even from Israel.

16, 17. The prophet now speaks, presenting in sharp contrast the confusion of the idolaters (v. 16) and the everlasting salvation enjoyed by Israel. The verbs should be rendered as presents.

They shall be ashamed &c.] Better: **they are ashamed, yea confounded all of them; they are gone away in confusion** (i.e. disgrace) etc. The perfect in Heb. depicts that which will have happened in that day.

The word for "idol" is used in the sense of "form" in Ps. xlix. 14 (R.V. marg.), only here of an idolatrous image.

17. *But Israel shall be saved in the LORD*] **Israel is saved by Jehovah.**

with an everlasting salvation] which shall never be turned into confusion. The state of things introduced by the deliverance is final, including the manifestation of Jehovah as He is, and such a union between Him and His people as can never be dissolved. As is usual in the prophets, the perfect dispensation, or what is called the Messianic age, is conceived as issuing immediately from the historical crisis which is the subject of the prophecy, in this case the deliverance from Babylon.

Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; 18
God himself that formed the earth and made it; he
hath established it,

He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited:
I *am* the LORD; and *there is* none else.

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the 19
earth:

I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in
vain:

world without end] More literally: **to all eternity**. The exact expression does not occur again.

18—25. The long passage on the mission of Cyrus closes here with the announcement of a salvation as universal as it is eternal (v. 17). A purpose of universal salvation is in harmony with the character of the God who made the world for man to dwell in (v. 18) and whose revelation of Himself to Israel bears the signature of absolute veracity (v. 19).

18. The words *God himself* form a sort of parenthesis, and should be rendered as in R.V., **he is God (or the God)**. Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 39.

he created it not in vain] lit. **not a chaos** (*tōhū*). The significance of the expression is seen from the contrast which immediately follows.

he formed it to be inhabited] and therefore the end of His ways cannot be the destruction of the race for whose existence He has prepared the earth. Jehovah's final purpose must be salvation.

19. The same character of goodwill to men is manifest in the manner of Jehovah's revelation to Israel. It has been intelligible, explicit, and (if the word may be used) candid.

in a dark place of the earth] R.V. **in a place of the land of darkness**. It is doubtful if there is any direct allusion to the oracles of heathenism, which had frequently to be sought in caves and deserts. The "land of darkness" might be the under-world, from which dubious oracles were obtained by necromancy and other magical arts (ch. viii. 19; 1 Sam. xxviii. 7 ff.). But the sense is perhaps sufficiently explained (in accordance with what follows) by Jer. ii. 31: "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?" Jehovah's revelation has not been like a dark, trackless desert, but a light in which men might walk towards an assured goal.

I said not...Seek ye me in vain] Lit. **in chaos** (*tōhū*, as v. 18), i.e. without definite guidance and without hope of result. When Jehovah said, "Seek me," He meant that He should be found (Jer. xxix. 13); in other words He has dealt openly and frankly with His people. It is this quality of revelation that is denoted by the word *righteousness* in the last line of the verse. It is used in its ethical sense of "trust-

I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

20 Assemble yourselves and come ;
Draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations :
They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their
graven image,

And pray unto a god *that* cannot save.
21 Tell ye, and bring *them* near ;
Yea, let them take counsel together :
Who hath declared this from ancient time ? *who* hath
told it from that time ?

Have not I the LORD ? and *there is* no God else beside
me ;

A just God and a saviour ; *there is* none beside me.

worthiness" or straightforwardness,—perfect correspondence between deeds and words.

things that are right] **uprightness.** The plural, as always in this word, expresses the abstract idea (see ch. xxvi. 7).

20, 21. The heathen are now summoned together that they may consider this attribute of Jehovah's character, as illustrated by the prediction of the victories of Cyrus. The question submitted to them is the same as in xli. 1—4, 21—29, xliii. 9—13 : who has foretold these events ? But this scene is imagined as taking place *after* the great crisis is over ; hence those addressed are the *escaped of the nations* (cf. Jer. li. 50), the survivors of a world-wide judgement, of which Cyrus is the instrument (see v. 14).

20. *that set up the wood...*] Render, with R.V., *that carry, &c.*, in religious processions (Am. v. 26), or perhaps into battle (2 Sam. v. 21). That idols have to be carried is a sign of their powerlessness (xlvi. 1 f. ; Jer. x. 5).

a god that cannot save] The contrast in the end of v. 21.

21. *Tell ye*] Better : **Declare ye**, as R.V.

bring them near] Some such object as "your strong arguments" (xli. 21) must be supplied, and has probably dropped out of the text.

who hath declared this...?] i.e. the rise of Cyrus and his conquests. The phrase *from that time* should be either *beforehand* or *long ago* (see on ch. xvi. 13).

a just God...beside me] Better as a single sentence : **a righteous God and a Deliverer there is not besides me.** Both attributes have been exhibited in the recent crisis ; righteousness (see on v. 19) in the explicit predictions of Cyrus, and salvation in the deliverance of Israel.

22—25. The demonstration of Jehovah's deity is followed by the proclamation of salvation to all mankind, and the declaration of His purpose that all the world shall worship Him.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the ²²
earth :

For I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

I have sworn by myself,

²³

The word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and
shall not return,

That unto me every knee shall bow,

Every tongue shall swear.

Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness ²⁴
and strength :

22. *Look unto me*] is strictly **Turn unto me** (sc. for help), a phrase elsewhere used of the acknowledgment of false gods (Lev. xix. 4; Hos. iii. 1; Deut. xxx. 17 &c., xxxi. 18 &c.; cf. Job v. 1). The second imperative expresses the consequence of the first: "Turn to Me and ye shall be saved." "Salvation" here has still its ordinary sense of deliverance; although the great judgement is past, it is plainly assumed that only those who own Jehovah's sovereignty shall be spared (*v.* 23). But the thought that it depends on knowledge of the true God, who is the God of salvation, conveys the suggestion at least of a more positive meaning; cf. John xvii. 3.

23. *By myself have I sworn*] Cf. Gen. xxii. 16; Jer. xxii. 5; and see Heb. vi. 13. The form of Jehovah's oath by Himself is given in ch. xlix. 18, "as I live, saith Jehovah."

the word is gone out &c.] Or, as R.V. marg.: **righteousness is gone forth from my mouth, a word which** (lit. "and it") **shall not return** (cf. ch. lv. 10 f.).

righteousness here means that which shall be verified,—a word to which the deed will correspond.

every knee shall bow (in homage, 1 Ki. xix. 18), *every tongue shall swear* (fealty, ch. xix. 18)]. The reading "confess" is substituted for "swear" in some codices of the LXX., as in Rom. xiv. 11, Phil. ii. 10, 11.

24, 25 express the faith of the religious community of the future.

Surely, shall one say, in the LORD &c.] Better: **Only in Jehovah, shall one say, &c.** The R.V. gives a different turn to the thought by including the word for "to me" in the parenthesis ("shall one say to me" [marg. "of me"]); while the A.V. treats it as part of the main sentence ("there is to me," i.e. "I have"). On the former view *righteousness* and *strength* are divine attributes; on the latter they are blessings bestowed by Jehovah on men. The rendering of A.V. is preferable, although it is opposed to the Hebr. accents.

righteousness] lit. "righteousnesses," the idea being intensified by the plural. It is often used of the mighty acts of Jehovah, the individual instances in which His righteous character is manifested (1 Sam. xii. 7; Mi. vi. 5; Ps. lxxi. 15 ff. &c.); here in like manner it must denote the experiences through which a right relation to God is verified. The parallelism with "strength" shews that it is almost identical with salvation or victory (see on ch. xli. 2 and xlvi. 13).

Even to him shall men come;

And all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

even to him...ashamed] to him shall one come &c.; or, to him shall come with shame all that were incensed (xli. 11) against him. The verb "be ashamed" seems merely to be a qualification of "shall come."

25. *be justified*] lit. *be righteous*, i.e. "enjoy righteousness" in the same sense as v. 24. Comp. Jer. xxiii. 6 ("Jehovah our Righteousness").

CH. XLVI. THE DOWNFALL OF THE GODS OF BABYLON.

In this and the two following chapters the person of Cyrus is only incidentally referred to; the leading idea is now the overthrow of Babylon, and the emancipation of Israel from its tyranny. Ch. xlv. begins with the fall of the *deities* of the city; and from their proved impotence, as contrasted with the omnipotence of Jehovah, proceeds to draw lessons for various classes among the exiles. The unity of the oracle is disputed by Duhm and Cheyne in so far as vv. 6—8 are concerned, and the removal of these verses would somewhat modify the reasoning of the chapter. As it stands, however, the natural divisions are the following:—

(1) vv. 1—4. A contrast between the Babylonian gods and the God of Israel; while these share the fate of their worshippers and *are borne away* in shameful flight, Jehovah is *the bearer* of His people, making its history and leading it to final victory.

(2) vv. 5—7. The scene described in vv. 1 f. suggests another sarcastic passage (after the manner of xl. 18—20, xlv. 9—20) on the folly of idolatry in general.

(3) vv. 8—11. A renewed appeal (see xli. 21—29, &c.) to the argument from prophecy, in which, with unwonted severity, the hearers are addressed as "rebels" (v. 8).

(4) vv. 12, 13. Addressing the opponents of Jehovah's purpose, the prophet announces the speedy deliverance of Israel as the goal to which events are hastening.

1, 2. The ignominious flight of the gods of Babylon.—*Bel* and *Nebo* are the Jupiter and Mercury of the Babylonian pantheon (they are represented by these planets), and were the supreme deities in Babylon at this time. *Bel* (*Bilu*) is the Babylonian form of the Hebrew *Ba'al* (=lord), and like that word is a generic name applicable to any deity. When used as a proper name it usually denotes Merodach (Marduk), the tutelary divinity of the city of Babylon (so Jer. l. 2, li. 44); although there was an older Bel, who is spoken of as his father. The elevation of Bel-Merodach to the chief place among the older gods, as recorded in the mythical Chaldæan account of the Creation (Tablet iv., 1 ff.), is the legendary counterpart of the ascendancy acquired by Babylon over the more ancient cities of the Euphrates Valley. *Nebo* (*Nabu*) was the son of Merodach; the chief seat of his worship being Borsippa, in the

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, 46
 Their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle :
 Your carriages *were* heavy loaden ;
They are a burden to the weary *beast*.
 They stoop, they bow down together ; 2
 They could not deliver the burden,
 But themselves are gone into captivity.

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, 3

vicinity of Babylon. His name, which is supposed to be from the same root as the Hebrew *nābî*, "prophet," seems to mark him out as the "speaker" of the gods (another point of contact with Mercury, "the chief speaker," Acts xiv. 12). He was also regarded as the inventor of writing. The frequency with which the Chaldæan kings are named after him (Nabo-polassar, Nebu-chadnezzar, Nabo-nidus) has been thought to shew that he was the patron deity of the dynasty.

boweth down...stoopeth (better *croucheth*)] The second verb to be pointed, like the first, as perfect (prophetic pf.).

their idols (ch. x. 11) *are* (R.V.) *upon the beasts, and upon the cattle*] The allusion is hardly to the custom of carrying away the idols of a conquered nation (Jer. xlviii. 7, xlix. 3; Hos. x. 5 f.), but rather to an attempt of the Babylonians to carry off their images on the approach of the Persians (see v. 2). Similarly, Merodach-Baladan packed his idols on ships and carried them off, at the approach of Sennacherib (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscr.*, Vol. II. p. 36.) *Beasts and cattle* usually mean respectively "wild beasts" and "domestic animals"; here, however, they both denote beasts of burden simply.

your carriages were heavy loaden] Rather as R.V. *the things that ye carried about*, i.e. in religious processions (ch. xlv. 20), *are made a load*. "At the New Year's festival the images of Merodach and his son Nebo were carried through Babylon in solemn procession on sacred barques of great magnificence, and along a promenade prepared for this purpose since Nabopolassar" (Fried. Delitzsch, quoted by Delitzsch, *Comm.* p. 403). Such scenes must have been familiar to the prophet and his readers, and gave additional point to the contrasted picture here imagined.

2. *they could not deliver*] i.e. *cause to escape*.

themselves are gone into captivity] The distinction allowed between the gods and their images is an ironical concession to heathen modes of thought. The fact that the gods are unable to save their own images means that they have vanished. The recently discovered inscriptions have shewn, however, that the idols of Babylon had nothing to fear from Cyrus.

3, 4. In the scene which he has just described the prophet sees an emblem of the inherent weakness of heathenism. There man carries his gods, and the result is that gods and worshippers are involved in

- And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Which are borne *by me* from the belly,
Which are carried from the womb :
4 And *even* to *your* old age I *am* he;
And *even* to hoar hairs will I carry *you* :
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.
5 To whom will ye liken me, and make *me* equal,
And compare me, that we may be like?
6 They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver in the balance,
And hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god :
They fall down, yea, they worship.

common ruin. Israel has had a far different experience of its relation to its God, having known Jehovah as One who has carried it from the beginning of its history (Ex. xix. 4; Deut. i. 31, xxxii. 11; Hos. xi. 3; cf. ch. xl. 11, lxiii. 9), and is able to bear it on to final salvation. The profound insight into the nature of religion which is characteristic of the writer is nowhere more clearly exhibited than in this striking and original contrast.

3. *all the remnant of the house of Israel*] It is doubtful whether there is a reference here to the scattered survivors of the Ten Tribes. More probably, the clause is a rhetorical variation of the previous "house of Jacob." The participles *borne* and *carried* are repeated from v. 1, although in inverse order ("carried things" and "made a load"). The words "by me" are better omitted.

4. *And even to your old age &c.*] Cf. Ps. lxxi. 18. What Jehovah has been to His people in the past, He will be for all the future. It is not implied that Israel is now "old and gray-headed," as an erroneous combination with ch. xlvii. 6 led Hitzig to suppose.

I am he] See on ch. xli. 4.

I have made] Better perhaps **I have done it.**
and will deliver] in express contrast to the false gods who "could not deliver" the dead burden of their images (v. 2).

5. Comp. the similar question of xl. 18, which as here introduces a sarcastic description of the manufacture of idols.

6, 7. Contemptuous description of idolatry in general. Comp. especially with ch. xlv. 9—20.

6. *They lavish gold &c.*] Better as an exclamation of contempt: **They that pour gold etc.** The *gold* and *silver* are the material out of which the images (or at least their plating) are to be made by the goldsmith (xl. 19) who is hired for the work. The word for *balance* is *qāneh* (reed), never elsewhere used in this sense. It probably denotes the beam of the balance.

they fall down] The same word (*šāgad*) in xlv. 15, 17, 19.

They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, 7
 And set him in his place, and he standeth;
 From his place shall he not remove:
 Yea, *one* shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer,
 Nor save him out of his trouble.
 Remember this, and shew yourselves men: 8
 Bring *it* again to mind, O ye transgressors.
 Remember the former *things* of old: 9
 For I *am* God, and *there is* none else;
 I *am* God, and *there is* none like me,
 Declaring the end from the beginning, 10
 And from ancient times *the things* that are not yet
 done,
 Saying, My counsel shall stand,
 And I will do all my pleasure:

7. *They bear him &c.*] the newly made idol, to his appointed place, from which he is powerless to move. How vain, therefore, is it to cry to him for help! He is a "god that cannot save" (xlvi. 20).

8—11. An appeal to history and prophecy in proof of Jehovah's divinity.

shew yourselves men] R.V. marg. renders "stand fast," but neither sense is suitable in an address to "rebels." The verb used (*hith'ōshāshū*) is unknown in Hebrew. The rendering of A.V. is based on a common view that it is a denominative from the word for "man" (*'ish*), which is grammatically untenable; that of R.V. marg. connects it with a root found in Aramaic, Assyrian and Arabic, meaning to "be firm." Of proposed emendations the easiest is Lagarde's, "be ye ashamed" (*hithbōshāshū*, after Gen. ii. 25). Others, *hithbōnānū*, "consider" (ch. xliii. 18); *hith'ashshāmu*, "acknowledge your guilt."

bring it again to mind] as ch. xlv. 19.

O ye transgressors] Rather *rebels* (xlviii. 8, liii. 12, lxvi. 24). From ch. xlv. 9 onwards there seems to be a growing sense of antagonism between the prophet and at least a section of his audience (see v. 12 and on xlviii. 1—11).

9. *former things of old*] See on xli. 22. The emphasis here lies less on the predictions than on the events themselves, which are of such a nature as to demonstrate that Jehovah alone is truly God.

10. *the end from the beginning*] i.e. the issue (of a particular series of events or period of history) from its origin.

the things that are not yet done] with closer reference to the events mentioned in v. 11. Cf. ch. xlviii. 5 ("before it has come to pass").

My counsel shall stand] Cf. ch. xiv. 24.

my pleasure] *my purpose* (see on ch. xlv. 28).

- 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east,
The man that executeth my counsel from a far country :
Yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass ;
I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.
- 12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted,
That *are* far from righteousness :
- 13 I bring near my righteousness ; it shall not be far off,
And my salvation shall not tarry :
And I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

11. The supreme illustration of the foreknowledge and power of Jehovah is the raising up of Cyrus. Cyrus is compared to a *ravenous bird* on account of the celerity of his movements (ch. xli. 3), just as Nebuchadnezzar had been likened to an eagle (Jer. xlix. 22 ; Ezek. xvii. 3). There can hardly be an allusion to the fact (if it be a fact) that the royal ensign of Persia was a golden eagle (Xenophon, *Cyrop.* VII. 1, 4).

from the east] xli. 2, 25.

the man that executeth my counsel] Lit. as R.V. **the man of my counsel** (the consonantal text has "his counsel"). Not of course "my counsellor" (as in xl. 13), but in the sense expressed by the A.V.

I have purposed] Lit. **I have formed**, i.e. "foreordained," as in ch. xxii. 11, xxxvii. 26.

12, 13. A call to repentance based on the nearness of deliverance.

ye stouthearted] The phrase means in Ps. lxxvi. 5 "courageous"; here it is rather akin to "stiff-hearted" in Ezek. ii. 4. The LXX. reads "ye that have lost heart" (אֲבִירֵי לֵב for אֲבִירֵי לֵב), and this is accepted as the true text by several commentators. The sense is too weak in this connexion; if there are men who on the eve of deliverance are "far from righteousness" they are surely those who are in more or less conscious opposition to the divine purpose (cf. xlv. 9). "Righteousness" in v. 13 is parallel to "salvation," and denotes the manifestation of Jehovah's righteousness in the deliverance of Israel. In this verse it is more natural to understand it in its forensic sense, of the right relation to God, which is the condition of sharing in the outward salvation. See Appendix, Note II.

13. *for Israel my glory*] Cf. xlix. 3. But another possible translation is "I will give...my glory unto Israel" (R.V. marg.).

The two verses express a paradox which enters deeply into the thought of the prophet. While salvation is near in point of time, yet Israel is spiritually far from it. Hence the work of salvation or righteousness has two aspects; along with the providential deliverance of which the agent is Cyrus, there is an inward and spiritual salvation which consists in bringing the nation to right thoughts about itself and God. And in this spiritual transformation the instrument is the Servant of Jehovah.

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of 47
 Babylon,
 Sit on the ground: *there is* no throne,
 O daughter of the Chaldeans;
 For thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

CH. XLVII. AN ODE ON THE FALL OF BABYLON.

The strain of prophetic exhortation is here interrupted by an ironical elegy or "taunt-song" with a strong resemblance to the ode on the king of Babylon in ch. xiv. 4—21. The humiliation of the city is represented by the graphic image of a delicate and luxurious lady of the harem, suddenly reduced to the shameful condition of a slave or a captive. This female personification of Babylon forms an effective, and no doubt intentional, contrast to the figure of Zion, the desolate and bereaved widow, who is soon to be restored to the honour and joys of motherhood (ch. xlix. 14 ff., li. 17 ff., liv.).—Although words of Jehovah occur in vv. 3 and 6, it is hardly natural to suppose that He is the speaker throughout. The singer is more probably either the nation of Israel (as in xiv. 4 ff.) or the prophet speaking in his own name.

The poem is usually divided into four unequal strophes, commencing with vv. 1, 5, 8 and 12. Dillmann finds in it a combination of several distinct poetic measures, and recognises the characteristic rhythm of the elegy only in the opening verses of the first three strophes (1, 5, 8). There is however an *approximation* to the structure of the *qinah* in many verses; and the question is suggested whether the departures from the regular form are not to be accounted for by errors in the transmission of the text. Duhm, omitting three clauses as interpolations (see below), makes out a division into five equal strophes (1—4, 5—7, 8—10 a, 10 b—12, 13—15) of seven lines each, and with a few minor alterations the elegiac cæsura (see on xiv. 4) is fairly well marked in nearly every line. The textual alterations may not commend themselves in each instance, but there is at least a presumption in favour of a stricter prosody than earlier commentators allow.

1—4. The first strophe consists of a tristich (v. 1) followed (on Duhm's reconstruction) by two distichs. The leading thought is the degradation of Babylon from her position of ease and luxury.

1. *virgin daughter of Babylon*] i.e. "virgin daughter, Babylon"; see on i. 8, cf. xxxvii. 22. The parallel phrase *daughter of the Chaldeans* is somewhat different. It describes Babylon as the city of (possessed by) the Chaldeans, the reigning dynasty. It *might* no doubt be a personification of the land of Chaldæa, like "daughter of Egypt" in Jer. xlv. 11; but this is less probable.

sit on the ground] A sign not of mourning, as in iii. 26, but of abject humiliation.

there is no throne] Render: **without a throne**, as R.V.

thou shalt no more be called] Lit. "thou shalt no more (be one whom) they call"; the peculiar construction being partly due to the Hebrew aversion to the use of the passive.

- 2 Take the millstones, and grind meal:
Uncover thy locks, make bare the leg,
Uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.
- 3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall
be seen:
I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee as a*
man.
- 4 *As for* our redeemer, the LORD of hosts *is* his name,
The Holy One of Israel.

tender and delicate] See Deut. xxviii. 56, "the tender and delicate woman which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground."

2. *Take the millstones &c.*] The luxurious lady must betake herself to the occupation of the meanest female slaves in the household: Ex. xi. 5; Job xxxi. 10.

uncover thy locks] Rather: take off thy veil (Cant. iv. 1, 3, vi. 7).

make bare the leg] remove the skirt. The last word does not occur elsewhere.

pass over the rivers] Render: pass through streams, omitting the article. The words are commonly taken to describe the hardships of a journey into exile, but they may simply refer to the degradations which she would have to undergo in performing the drudgery of a common slave (so Dillmann).

3. *Thy nakedness...seen*] These words, which undoubtedly spoil the rhythm of the verse, are deleted by Duhm as a gloss suggested by the latter part of v. 2.

and I will not meet thee as a man] The sense is very obscure. Either (a) "I will spare no man" (i.e. meet him with friendly intentions); the figure of the virgin being dropped: or (b) "I will not entreat any man (for help)": or (c) the vowel-points being changed, "I will let no man intercede,"—all unacceptable on one ground or another. The difficulty lies in the word for "man"; this would be got rid of by simply changing 'ādām into 'āmar (= "saith") read by some MSS. of the LXX. as the first word of v. 4. The verb then stands absolutely, and is best pointed and translated as *Niphal tolerativum*: "I will not (let myself) be entreated." (Oort and Duhm). See further on v. 4.

4. The verse as it stands interrupts the continuity of the poem, especially in the view of those who hold that the speaker is throughout Jehovah. Lowth and others regard it as the response of a chorus of Israelites to the words of God in v. 3, while Dillmann and others unhesitatingly pronounce it to be an interpolation. But all reasonable objections are removed if we supply the word "saith" as in two Greek codices. Combining this with the other suggestion of Oort mentioned above, the last distich of the strophe reads thus:—

I will take vengeance and will not be entreated,—saith our Redeemer;

Jehovah of Hosts is His name,—the Holy One of Israel.

Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans:

For thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance,

And given them into thine hand:

Thou didst shew them no mercy;

Upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever:

7

5—7. The second strophe commences anew with an apostrophe to Babylon. The keynote is struck in the words “mistress of kingdoms.” She is threatened with the loss of her imperial power, because she has so grossly abused it by her cruelty to Israel.

5. *get thee into darkness*] Darkness may be a symbol either of imprisonment (ch. xlii. 7) or, more generally, of misery; Lam. iii. 2.

lady of kingdoms] Lit. “mistress” (xxiv. 2). The word is used of the queen in Jer. xiii. 18, in a connexion somewhat similar to this. Babylon is addressed as an imperial city holding the destinies of many kingdoms in her hands.

6. Jehovah speaks, charging Babylon with pitiless inhumanity towards His people when they were delivered to her for chastisement (for the thought cf. Zech. i. 15).

I was wroth with my people] Cf. liv. 9, lvii. 16 f., lxiv. 5, 9.

I have polluted (R.V. I profaned) mine inheritance] Cf. xliii. 28. “Profane” is the opposite of “holy;” as “holy to Jehovah” Israel was inviolable (Jer. ii. 3), but when this relation ceased she passed under the power of the heathen.

upon the ancient] Better, as R.V.: *upon the aged*. Although the word is sing., there can be no doubt that it is used literally of the old men on whom the hardships of captivity fell most heavily (cf. Lam. iv. 16, v. 12). The idea that Israel as a nation is meant is not to be entertained (see on ch. xlv. 4). We have little knowledge of the circumstances of the Israelites in exile, but there is nothing improbable in the supposition that some of them were put to forced labour, and that cases of exceptional barbarity may have occurred.

7. Such inconsiderate cruelty can only be explained by the delusion that her supremacy was eternal, that no day of reckoning could ever come to her.

And thou saidst, I shall be &c.] Render (with a different division of clauses) *And thou saidst I shall be for ever—a lady eternally* (lit. “mistress of eternity”). The word here rendered “eternity” (*ad*) is taken in the received text as a conjunction (A.V. “so that,” strictly “until”). The rhythm requires it to be treated as a substantive in the genitive after “mistress.” It is used in exactly the same way in the name “Father of eternity” (ch. ix. 6).

- So that thou didst not lay these *things* to thy heart,
 Neither didst remember the latter end of it.
- 8 Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures,
 that dwellest carelessly,
 That sayest in thine heart, I *am*, and none else besides
 me;
 I shall not sit *as* a widow, neither shall I know the loss of
 children :
- 9 But these two *things* shall come to thee *in* a moment in
 one day,
 The loss of children, and widowhood :
 They shall come upon thee in their perfection
 For the multitude of thy sorceries, *and* for the great
 abundance of thine enchantments.
- 10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness : thou hast said,
 None seeth me.

these things] thy cruelties;—in what sense she failed to lay them to heart is explained by the following clause.

the latter end of it] or the issue thereof, i.e. the inevitable retribution.

8—10 a. The third strophe: Babylon's careless confidence in her own future shall be put to shame by the suddenness of her calamities.

thou that art given to pleasures] *thou voluptuous one* (Cheyne). The word does not occur again. The remaining clauses of the verse recur verbatim in Zeph. ii. 15. (of Nineveh).

that dwellest carelessly] that sittest securely.

I am and none else besides me] Rather: **I and none besides**. The words express Babylon's sense of her unique position. The vocalic ending of the word for "none" (*'aphsî* from *'ephēs* = cessation, nothingness) cannot be the poss. suff. of 1st pers., which would give the sense "I am no more,"—the opposite of what is intended. It is probably an old case-termination which has ceased to have any significance in the Hebr. of the O.T. So again in v. 10.

9. *widowhood*] is simply a figure for desolation, which is not to be pressed by asking the question, Who was the husband? The reference could hardly be to the king (for which there are no analogies), still less to the foreign nations with whom she trafficked.

in their perfection] i.e. **in their full measure** (R.V.).

for the multitude] Better: **in spite of**, &c. (as in ch. v. 25 &c., "for all this"). Strict rhythm would here be restored by transposing the two clauses: "for the great abundance...—for the multitude..."

10. *thou hast trusted &c.*] Better perhaps: **thou hast been confident in thy wickedness**; hast perpetrated wickedness without a misgiving or a thought of retribution. "Wickedness" probably means "tyranny," as Nah. iii. 19.

Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee;

And thou hast said in thine heart, I *am*, and none else besides me.

Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not 11
know from whence it riseth:

And mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off:

And desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, *which*
thou shalt not know.

Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multi- 12
tude of thy sorceries,

Wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth;

None seeth me] No holy and righteous God takes notice. Cf. Ps. x. 11, xciv. 7.

10 b—12. The fourth strophe gives the reason for Babylon's security: the elaborate system of magic for which she was famous, and in which her practical religion largely consisted. For an account of Babylonian sorcery &c., see Lenormant, *Chaldaean Magic* (transl.), esp. chs. I—IV.

Thy wisdom and thy knowledge] The context shews that it is the occult knowledge of sorcery, astrology &c., that is meant.

11. *evil*] is the same word as "wickedness" in v. 10; the play on the two meanings of the word is intentional.

from whence it riseth] The literal rendering is given in R.V. "the dawning thereof." But the metaphor is unnatural (of calamity), and the parallelism of the next line shews that an inf. must be read. A similar Arabic verb means "to charm"; accordingly most commentators now translate *which thou shalt not know (how) to charm away* (see R.V. marg.). Some, however, prefer a slight alteration of the text, reading "to buy off" (*שחרה* for *שחרה*; cf. the parallelism in Prov. vi. 35).

to put off] is literally *to expiate*, i.e. avert by an offering. "They try to avert evil and procure good, either by purifications, sacrifices, or enchantments." (Diodorus Siculus, quoted by Lenormant, *l.c.* p. 12.)

which thou shalt not know] The parallelism with the other two lines of the tristich suggests that an inf. should be supplied at the end: *which thou shalt not know how to...* (so Duhm).

12. *Stand now with &c.*] Either *Stand by thy spells*, persist in them, stake everything upon them, as Lev. xiii. 5; Jer. xlviii. 11, Ezek. xiii. 5 (these parallels, however, are not quite convincing); or (as in v. 13) *Stand forth with thy spells*.

wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth] Or: *with which thou hast wearied thyself*, &c.; see on ch. xliii. 22. Duhm omits these words entirely, for the sake of the rhythm, but they excite no suspicion on any other ground.

- If so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.
- 13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels.
Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators,
Stand *up*, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee.
- 14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame:
There shall not be a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it.
- 15 Thus shall they be unto thee *with* whom thou hast laboured, *even* thy merchants, from thy youth:

if so be &c.] perchance thou wilt be able to profit!—
perchance thou wilt inspire terror! (Cf. R.V.)

keen and bitter irony.

13—15. The last strophe dwells on the futility of all the resources that the “daughter of Babel” can call to her aid.

13. *let now the astrologers &c.*] Render: **let them stand forth** (v. 12) **now and save thee**,—**they that have divided the heavens, they that gaze on the stars, that announce month by month something of what shall befall thee.**

astrologers is an apt equivalent of “they that divided the heavens” (i.e. into the constellations of the Zodiac, for astrological purposes). This at least seems the most probable meaning, although the verb for “divide” does not occur elsewhere in Hebrew (in Arab. it means to “divide into great pieces”), and the Ancient Versions render otherwise [LXX. οἱ ἀστρολόγοι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ]. So *monthly prognosticators* is a felicitous condensation of the thought of the last clause, although the E.V. (following some Jewish authorities) has mistaken the syntactical construction. The special reference here is to the preparation of monthly almanacs (based on astrological calculations) in which coming disasters were foretold, lucky and unlucky days pointed out, &c. A specimen of these almanacs is translated by Sayce in *Trans. of the Society of Bibl. Archaeology*, III. 229 ff.

14. They cannot even save their own lives, much less the State. *themselves*] **their (own) life.**

there shall not be a coal &c.] Better: **It is no (glowing) coal to warm oneself withal; no fire to sit before!** i.e. no genial hearth for comfort, but an all-consuming fire! The sentence is prosaic and unnecessary, and might readily be sacrificed (with Duhm) to the exigencies of the strophe and the elegiac measure.

15. *with whom thou hast laboured*] See on v. 12.

They shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

thy merchants] Cf. Nah. iii. 16 f., and see on ch. xiii. 14. The abrupt introduction of merchants here is somewhat perplexing, especially after the adverb "so"; but the word never means anything else in Hebrew. It might, no doubt, be used in a wide sense, of nations that trafficked with Babylon; but it may be merely a gloss suggested by ch. xiii. 14 and Nah. iii. 16. (Cheyne, *Sacred Books of O.T.*)

every one to his quarter] Rather: **each straight before him**; cf. Ezek. i. 9 (the cherubim went "everyone straight forward.").

CH. XLVIII. EXHORTATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE EXILES IN THE NEAR PROSPECT OF DELIVERANCE.

The chapter is largely a recapitulation of certain outstanding themes of the prophecy, several of which are here touched upon for the last time. The references to the victories of Cyrus, the predictions of the fall of Babylon, the appeal to prophecy, and the distinction between "former things" and "new things" henceforth disappear from the circle of the author's thoughts, along with other familiar subjects, such as the polemic against idolatry and the impressive inculcation of the sole deity of Jehovah. This circumstance indicates that we have reached the end of the first great division of the prophecy, and the impression is confirmed by the closing hymn of praise, which carries us forward to the very eve of the departure from Babylon. On some critical difficulties of the passage see the introductory notes to vv. 1—11 and 17—19, below.

There are four distinct sections:

(i) vv. 1—11. The prophet vindicates the methods of Jehovah's revelation to Israel; predictions have been given and withheld in such a way as to remove every excuse for attributing the great events of history to any other cause than the will of God.

(ii) vv. 12—16. An instance of the withholding of prophecy till the eve of its accomplishment is the present announcement of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus; it is the crowning proof of Jehovah's abiding presence with His people.

(iii) vv. 17—19. Jehovah's compassion finds expression in a cry of distress over the neglect of His commandments, which has stood in the way of Israel's salvation.

(iv) vv. 20—22. In a final jubilant outburst of praise, the exiles are summoned to flee from Babylon, whose power is already broken, and to proclaim the marvels of their redemption to the ends of the earth.

1—11. These verses present some peculiar features, both of thought and style, which have been felt by scholars representing widely diverging critical tendencies. The severe judgement on the people goes beyond anything else in the prophecy; and, as has been pointed out,

- 48 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob,
Which are called by the name of Israel,
And are come forth out of the waters of Judah,
Which swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But not in truth, nor in righteousness.
2 For they call themselves of the holy city,
And stay themselves upon the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.

seems to breathe the spirit of Ezekiel rather than of the second Isaiah. Israel is addressed as a nation of hypocrites, of apostates, and of persistent idolaters. Then the argument of the passage as a whole is very remarkable. The "former things" (i.e. the events that have just taken place) were announced long beforehand, lest Israel should be led to ascribe them to some false god (*vv.* 3—6 *a*); but the "new things" (the subject of the present prophecy) have been "hidden" till the last moment, lest the people in their perversity should say they had known of them all along (6 *b*—8). Duhm and Cheyne agree in assigning these peculiarities to an editor, who has supplied a running commentary on the words of the original author, in the shape of annotations. There is much in the section which would be more intelligible if inserted by a later writer; but the method attributed to the editor is peculiar, and no motive suggests itself for his systematic attempt to correct the tendency of this isolated passage. The difficulties are perhaps exaggerated; the stern attitude towards the nation is not without parallels (see ch. xlv. 9 ff., and on ch. xlv. 8), and the special development of the argument from prophecy cannot be shown to involve a radical inconsistency with the prophet's general conceptions.

1. *Hear ye this*] refers to the following oracle, which commences with *v.* 3 (cf. xlv. 3 and xlviii. 12). The rest of *vv.* 1 f. is an editorial insertion, in the view of Duhm and Cheyne (see above).

which are called] Or, **which call themselves**, as in *v.* 2 (cf. ch. xlv. 5). For the remnant of the tribe of Judah, whom the author has in his view, the name "Israel" was really a title of honour.

out of the waters of Judah] The metaphor can be explained from Ps. lxxiii. 26 (R.V.), where the ancestor of the nation is compared to a fountain or cistern. It is perhaps better, however, to read (with Secker) *mimm'ê* for *mimmê*, rendering **from the bowels** (as *v.* 19) of Judah.

To *swear by the name of the LORD* is a profession of allegiance to Him, and as such is enjoined as a religious duty (Deut. vi. 13, x. 20).

make mention of] i.e. celebrate; Ps. xx. 7. The words *not in truth, nor in righteousness* do not refer specially to false swearing, but mean that the profession is formal and insincere.

2. *of (or by) the holy city*] The phrase is here applied to Jerusalem for the first time in the O.T. It occurs again in ch. lii. 1, elsewhere only in the books of Nehemiah and Daniel (comp. Matt. iv. 5).

I have declared the former *things* from the beginning ; 3
And they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed
them ;

I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass.

Because I knew that thou *art* obstinate,

And thy neck *is* an iron sinew,

And thy brow brass :

I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee ; 5

Before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee :

Lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them,

And my graven image, and my molten image, hath com-
manded them.

Thou hast heard, see all this ;

And will not ye declare *it* ?

I have shewed thee new *things* from this time,

Even hidden *things*, and thou didst not know them.

3—6 *a* inculcate the lesson of the “former things,” i.e. the events that have now taken place, especially the appearance of Cyrus. These were predicted in advance, that Israel might not be able to say they were done by the false gods (*v.* 5).

3. For *from the beginning*, render *beforehand*, or (as R.V.) “from of old.”

they (the predictions) *went forth out of my mouth...I did them*] brought the events to pass; the *rt'shônôth* including both the predictions and their historical fulfilments (see on ch. xli. 22).

4. Cf. Ezek. iii. 7—9.

thy neck is an iron sinew] Cf. for the idea Ex. xxxii. 9; Deut. ix. 6, 13.

5. *I have even...thee*] **And I announced it to thee beforehand** (*v.* 3).
lest thou shouldest say &c.] But for the predictions the appearance

of Cyrus would have been attributed to the idols rather than to the God who spoke through the prophets. The prevalence of idolatry among the exiles is abundantly proved by the book of Ezekiel.

6. *see all this*] **see it all** (sc. fulfilled).

and will not ye declare it?] Better (with the change of a consonant) **and you, will ye not bear witness?** (Duhm). Cf. ch. xliii. 12.

6 *b*—8. Jehovah has proved His power to foretell by the fulfilment of past predictions (*vv.* 3—6 *a*); now He announces new things.

I have shewed thee] Rather: **I shew thee** (in the act of speaking).

new things] viz. those specified in *v.* 14,—the conquest of Babylon and all that results from it, the deliverance of Israel, the overthrow of heathenism and the manifestation of the glory of Jehovah.

hidden things] Lit. “things kept” (in reserve). *and thou didst not know them*] **which thou hast not known** (R.V.). With the exception of one letter the clause coincides with one in Jer. xxxiii. 3 (“difficult things which thou knowest not”).

- 7 They are created now, and not from the beginning;
Even before the day when thou heardest them not;
Lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.
- 8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not;
Yea, from that time *that* thine ear was not opened:
For I knew *that* thou wouldest deal very treacherously,
And wast called a transgressor from the womb.
- 9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger,
And *for* my praise will I refrain for thee,
That *I* cut thee not off.

7. *They are created now*] To create is to call into being by a word; and the idea here seems to be that the prophetic word which announces, is at the same time the creative fiat of Jehovah.

not from the beginning] **not aforetime** (see v. 3).

even before the day when &c.] Render with R.V. **and before this day thou heardest them not**. The phrase "before the day" means "heretofore," the opposite of "from this day forth" in ch. xliii. 13.

Behold, I knew them] The events would have lost the effect of novelty if announced long before. Unbelief dies hard; when it can no longer say, "My idol did it," it is apt to take refuge in another subterfuge and say, "It is what I expected."

8. *Yea, thou heardest not &c.*] Better: **Thou hast neither heard nor known, nor was thine ear opened beforehand**. The verbal form for "was opened" is properly transitive. It is used, however, in ch. lx. 11 of gates standing open, and in Cant. vii. 13 of the opening of a flower. The LXX. reads "I opened," and this gives a better sense, the assertion being not that Israel's ear refused to open, but that Jehovah had not opened it, i.e. had not given a revelation. A similar conception of revelation, though with a different verb, in ch. xxii. 14; 1 Sam. ix. 15; with the same verb, in ch. l. 5.

that thou wouldest deal very treacherously] Rather: **that thou art utterly treacherous**. *a transgressor*] **a rebel**. Such has been the character of Israel as revealed in its past history; it would have abused the knowledge if the predictions had been made earlier.

9—11. A nation so sunk in unbelief must have perished, but for Jehovah's regard for His name. The thought is characteristic of Ezekiel (see esp. ch. xx.). The expression "for my name's sake" (v. 9) is not found elsewhere in this prophecy; "for my own sake" (v. 11) occurs in ch. xliii. 25.

9. The verbs should be rendered in the present tense. That for *refrain* (found only here) means literally "muzzle:" the object ("my anger") is to be supplied from the previous clause.

that I cut thee not off] The idea that Israel is in danger of being cut off is no doubt a surprising one in the mouth of this prophet (Duhm).

10. Instead of cutting off Israel, Jehovah has purified it in the furnace of affliction. That the process has been fruitless of beneficial

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; 10
I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.
For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I 11
do it:

For how should *my name* be polluted?
And I will not give my glory unto another.

Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called; 12
I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.
Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, 13
And my right hand hath spanned the heavens:
When I call unto them, they stand *up* together.
All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; 14

result (Dillmann) is suggested only by a particular interpretation of the words.

but not with silver] The phrase is very obscure. Dillmann and others take it to mean "not with silver as a result," without obtaining any pure metal. Others render "not as silver," i.e. either "not so severely as silver is refined," or "with a refining of a different nature." None of the proposed interpretations is satisfactory.

I have chosen thee in the furnace &c.] Render: **I have tried thee** &c. (R.V. marg.). This sense of the verb is Aramaic (cf. Job xxxiv. 4?), and since the verb "choose" is a common word of the prophet, the fact of its being found here in a different sense may be an argument against his authorship.

On the figure of the verse see ch. i. 25; Jer. vi. 29, ix. 7; Zech. xiii. 9; Mal. iii. 2, 3; 1 Pet. i. 7.

11. *for how should my name be polluted?*] Better: **for how is it profaned!** a parenthetic ejaculation, and in all probability a marginal gloss.

I will not give my glory unto another] Cf. ch. xlii. 8. The "glory" is that of bringing to pass the marvellous "new things," the era of eternal salvation.

12—16. The substance of the "new things" (v. 6) is that Jehovah has called Cyrus to execute His pleasure on the Chaldeans (14 f.), and now openly announces His purpose beforehand (16).

12. *I am he*] See on ch. xli. 4. *I am the first...the last*] xliv. 6.

13. Cf. ch. xl. 12, 22, 26; Ps. cii. 25. For *hath spanned* render **hath spread out** (as R.V.). The verb is Aramaic, and does not occur elsewhere in the O.T.

when I call...they stand up] Ps. xxxiii. 9.

14. *All ye*] The summons is addressed, not as in ch. xli. 1—4 &c. to the nations, but to the people of Israel; the gods of the heathen are referred to in the words *which among them* &c.

- Which among them hath declared these *things*?
 The LORD hath loved him :
 He will do his pleasure on Babylon,
 And his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans.
- 15 I, *even* I, have spoken ; yea, I have called him :
 I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.
- 16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this ;
 I have not spoken in secret from the beginning ;
 From the time that it was, there *am* I :
 And now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

The LORD hath loved him] is to be construed as a relative sentence : **he whom Jehovah loveth shall perform** etc. A new title, similar to those in xlv. 28, xlv. 1, xlv. 11, is here bestowed upon Cyrus (comp. "my friend" of Abraham in xli. 8). *his pleasure*] see on xlii. 21.

and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans] A preposition has dropped out or must be supplied from the preceding clause ; and then we may either render as E.V. (in which case "his arm" would most naturally mean the arm, i.e. the might, of Cyrus) ; or thus : "and (he will perform) His arm (Jehovah's mighty judgement) on the Chaldeans" (Dillmann). But although "arm" is a symbol of might, it could hardly be used alone of judgement. The LXX. ("to destroy the seed of the Chaldeans") obviously read *zera'* instead of *zērō'ô* ; and this is probably the better text. Render simply **and (on) the seed of the Chaldeans**.

16. *I have not spoken in secret*] Cf. ch. xlv. 19.
from the beginning ; from the time that it was] The sense is somewhat obscure. The pronoun "it" cannot refer to the world or the creation, which would require to be expressed ; the implied antecedent must be the subject of which the prophet is speaking, the purpose of Jehovah against Babylon. The "beginning" will therefore be either the origin of revelation in general, or of the series of prophecies now being fulfilled. The meaning may be paraphrased thus : Jehovah has never from the beginning spoken in dark and uncertain oracles, and He does not conceal Himself now when events are already moving towards the accomplishment of His words ; He is *there*, interpreting as well as guiding the course of history. That Jehovah is the speaker thus far cannot be questioned, in spite of the last clause of the verse. For the phrase "*there am I*," comp. Prov. viii. 27 (in the mouth of the personified Wisdom of God).

and now the Lord GOD &c.] Render : **and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me and** (i.e. with) **His spirit** ; "His spirit" being not a second subject along with Jehovah, but a second object. For the idea cf. ch. lxi. 1 and Zech. vii. 12. The Spirit is never spoken of in the O.T. as the sender of the prophets, or as an independent agent distinct from Jehovah. The isolation of this sentence from its context raises

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, the Holy One of ¹⁷
Israel;

I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit,
Which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go.

O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! ¹⁸

doubts as to its genuineness. The sudden change of speaker disconnects it from what precedes, and it is equally unsuitable as an introduction to vv. 17—19, where Jehovah Himself is again introduced by the ordinary prophetic formula. A prelude to ch. xlix. (Delitzsch) it cannot possibly be; and it is utterly arbitrary and unnatural to suppose that the words are spoken by the "Servant of Jehovah." If they are genuine they are undoubtedly words of the prophet, who here calls attention to himself and his mission, in a way which has no parallel in ch. xl.—lv. Duhm and Cheyne hold that the words are interpolated; the motive for their insertion being a misunderstanding of the first part of the verse. Taking "from the beginning" and "from the time that it was" to refer to the Creation, the editor supplied the contrast ("and now"), which he believed the author to have in his mind.

17—19. If Israel had but known Jehovah as its faithful Guide, and obeyed His commandments, how different would its present condition have been! The short passage has a striking resemblance to Ps. lxxxii. 13—16, and is of singular beauty and depth of feeling. But the disappointment expressed, that Israel has not attained to righteousness by the keeping of the Divine law, is not altogether natural in this connexion, or in the circumstances in which the prophecy was written. It breathes rather the spirit of a time of depression, when Israel seemed in danger of being "cut off," and when the faith of the Church was not sustained by the immediate prospect of deliverance. Moreover, the song of triumph in vv. 20 f. is the proper sequel (as in every similar instance) of the announcement of deliverance in 12—16 a.; and it will be felt that the obvious and natural connexion is disturbed by a sigh of regret for what might have been. It is with reluctance that one is driven to assign a thought so finely expressed to an interpolator, but a fair interpretation of the spirit of the passage points strongly to that conclusion (so again Duhm and Cheyne).

17. The introduction is in the prophet's usual manner; cf. ch. xli. 14, xliii. 14, xlix. 7.

which teacheth thee to profit] i.e. profitably or "for thy profit"; cf. xliv. 10 ("to no profit"), xlvii. 12.

18. *O that thou hadst hearkened &c.*] This is the strict rendering of the Hebr. idiom, which properly expresses a wish that has not been realised (see Driver, *Tenses*, § 140). It *may*, indeed (as in ch. lxiv. 1), be used in an impassioned wish for the future, and many commentators prefer that sense here,—"*O that thou wouldst hearken*" (see Davidson, *Syntax*, § 134). So R.V. marg. But the construction in xlv. 1 is exceptional, and the two cases are not strictly parallel. Here the reference to the past is strengthened by the following clauses: "*then had thy*

- Then had thy peace been as a river,
 And thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:
 19 Thy seed also had been as the sand,
 And the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof;
 His name should not have been cut off nor destroyed
 from before me.
- 20 Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans,

peace been" &c. (consec. impf.); and it is only a feeling of the unsuitability of the idea to the discourse that could ever suggest a departure from the ordinary rule of syntax. It is true that "such a retrospect here at the close would be extraordinary" (Dillmann), but in reality a hypothetical promise of future blessedness would be just as surprising. The difficulty is not grammatical but critical.

peace means national **prosperity**, "welfare," as explained in the next verse (cf. ch. lxvi. 12); *righteousness* is used in the same sense as in ch. xlv. 8.

as a river] i.e. a perennial stream, such as the Euphrates (cf. Am. v. 24). It is easy to understand the impression made on the mind of a native of Palestine, accustomed to "deceitful brooks" that run dry in the summer, by the sight of a great river, flowing on for ever in undiminished volume. The actual history of Israel had been like the *wadis* of Judæa, transient gleams of prosperity being interrupted by long intervals of misfortune; the river suggests to the writer an image of the boundless and unfailing blessedness which would have followed the keeping of the Divine commandments.

the waves of the sea] cf. ch. xi. 9.

19. *as the sand*] A common comparison; see ch. x. 22; Gen. xxii. 17; Hos. i. 10 &c.

like the gravel thereof] Lit. **the grains thereof**. The word used resembles a fem. plur. of that which immediately precedes ("bowels"); hence some commentators translate "the entrails thereof" (i.e. the fishes), taking as antecedent of the pronoun the word "sea" in the previous verse (see R.V. marg.). It would be better to explain it at once of the "entrails" of the sand (i.e. worms), for which indeed there is said to be a Syriac parallel (see Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, col. 2185). But both comparisons alike are prosaic and unnatural. The word is no doubt identical with the Aramaic *mā'āh*, "kernel" (generally used of a small coin).

his name &c.] **its name** (that of the "seed") **should not be cut off** &c.

20, 21 (cf. ch. lii. 11, 12) form the lyrical conclusion of this division of the prophecy. In anticipation of this second exodus of Israel, the prophet puts a song of praise in the mouth of the redeemed exiles.

flee ye from the Chaldeans] or "from Chaldæa" (see on xlvii. 1). The verb *flee* probably means no more than "hasten" (see ch. lii. 12).

With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this,
Utter it *even* to the end of the earth;
Say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.
And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the ²¹
deserts:

He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them:
He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.
There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked. ²²

with a voice of singing...tell this] The exiles' shout of joy is a revelation to the world of the greatness of the God of Israel.

utter it] Lit. "send it forth," as in ch. xlii. 1.

21. These are still words of the ransomed people. The allusions are to the miracles in the wilderness of Sinai (cf. Ex. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 11) which are represented as having been repeated during the desert journey of the returning exiles.

22. The words are taken from ch. lvii. 21, where, however, they stand in their proper connexion. Here they are either a gloss or an editorial insertion intended to mark the close of a division of the prophecy. See the Introduction, p. x.

CH. XLIX. 1—13. THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH: HIS FIDELITY AMIDST DISCOURAGEMENTS, AND THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF HIS MISSION.

The beginning of ch. xlix. seems to mark a distinct advance in the development of the prophet's conceptions. "The controversial tone, the repeated comparisons between Jehovah and the idols, with the arguments based upon them, disappear; the prophet feels that, as regards these points, he has made his position sufficiently secure. For the same reason, allusions to Cyrus and his conquest of Babylon cease also; that, likewise, is now taken for granted" (Driver, *Isaiah*², pp. 148 f.). In the remaining discourses (ch. xlix.—lv.) the author concentrates his attention almost exclusively on his central message of consolation, and the glorious future in store for Israel. His treatment of this theme moves along two lines, which alternate with each other as the manner of the writer is. The first is represented by the idea of the Servant of the Lord, the second by the figure of Zion, both being personifications, although in very different senses, of the people of Israel (see on ch. xl. 1). The Servant represents the ideal Israel as Jehovah's instrument, first, in restoring the unity and prosperity of the nation, and second, in extending the knowledge of God to the nations of the world. Zion, on the other hand, is the representative of Israel in its passive aspect, as deserted and humbled in the present, but at the same time the recipient of the blessings which accrue from the work and sufferings of the Lord's Servant.

The opening section consists of:—

i. A new description of the mission and experience of the Servant of Jehovah (cf. ch. xlii. 1—4) in the form of an address by the Servant

to the nations (*vv.* 1—6). These verses form the second of the four "Servant-passages" which occur in the book.

ii. A promise of speedy restoration to Israel, obviously based on the preceding description (*vv.* 7—12).

iii. A hymn of gratitude to Jehovah, called forth as usual by the prospect of deliverance (*v.* 13).

1—6. The Servant's address to the nations. The passage forms the natural sequel to *ch.* xlii. 1—4, and adds some fresh features to the portrait there presented. (1) The Servant, speaking now in his own name, expresses his consciousness of the mission entrusted to him by Jehovah (*vv.* 1—3). (2) He records his failure in the past, and the sense of disappointment caused in him by the apparent fruitlessness of his labour; yet his faith in his mission remains constant (*v.* 4). (3) But now his doubts have been removed by a revelation of the great purpose for which Jehovah has raised him up; viz., to be the organ of His salvation to the ends of the earth (*vv.* 5, 6).

It still remains the most probable view that Israel is here spoken of under the name of the Servant of Jehovah; although two objections are raised in addition to those suggested by xlii. 1—4. (a) The Servant is described as one who has a history and an experience behind him, as well as a mission to fulfil. Now this experience is not that of the nation, which was conscious of no unique religious mission, and therefore had no such sense of defeat as is described in *v.* 4. And if we say that it is not the actual but the ideal Israel that is meant, we are asked to explain how an ideal can have a history, or when the ideal Israel was born, or before whom Jehovah mentioned its name (Duhm). (b) Another difficulty is created by the fact that the Servant is here expressly distinguished from Israel when it is said that the restoration of the nation is to be effected by his activity. These objections are perhaps sufficiently met by the consideration that the ideal represented by the Servant is one that has been partially realised in the experience of the best part of the nation. Since the beginning of prophecy there had been a section of the people that had laboured for the conversion of Israel, and there were doubtless many among the exiles whose feelings of disappointment are truthfully reflected by the language put into the mouth of the Servant. There is nothing unnatural in the supposition that this party should be regarded as embodying the true genius of Israel, or that their experience should be transferred to the ideal figure by which the prophet sets forth his inspired interpretation of Israel's history. Nor is there any great difficulty in the further thought that the ideal Servant, as represented by this minority, laboured for the reunion and upbuilding of the future Israel. This also corresponds to a fact of history, for nothing is more certain than that but for the influence of the prophetic teaching the Israelitish nationality would have perished during the Captivity. The prophet's conception of Israel's unique position is singularly profound as well as elevated; but it does not appear that any feature thus far introduced into the portrait of Jehovah's Servant violates the conditions of a natural personification. (See further Introduction, pp. xxxiii f.; and Appendix, Note I.)

Listen, O isles, unto me ; 49
 And hearken, ye people, from afar ;
 The LORD hath called me from the womb ;
 From the bowels of my mother hath he made mention
 of my name.
 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword ; 2
 In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me,
 And made me a polished shaft ;
 In his quiver hath he hid me ;
 And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, 3
 O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

1—3. The call and equipment of the Servant by Jehovah. The nations of the world are addressed, because the great announcement that the speaker has to make (v. 6) concerns them. Although Jeremiah had already been conscious of being a “prophet to the nations” (Jer. i. 5), the self-consciousness here attributed to the Servant is too great to be that of any private individual, whether prophet or teacher.

O isles] see on ch. xli. 1. For *people* render *peoples* (R.V.).

the LORD hath called me (xlii. 6 &c.) *from the womb*] Cf. ch. xlv. 2, 24, xlv. 3, where the same metaphor is used of the beginning of the nation’s history. *made mention of my name*] Cf. xliii. 1.

2. The Servant is described as one prepared in secret for his great work. He compares himself to a weapon fashioned by Jehovah for His own use, but kept in reserve till the fulness of time. As the ideal prophet, he speaks of his *mouth*, the organ of prophetic utterance (see Jer. i. 9; Is. vi. 7), as made *like a sharp sword* in virtue of the “word” which Jehovah puts in it (ch. li. 16; cf. Heb. iv. 12).

in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me] (ch. li. 16). The metaphor perhaps denotes protection rather than secrecy.

a polished arrow] see Jer. li. 16.

There is nothing in the verse inconsistent with the idea that the speaker is Israel personified. The fundamental thought, translated into modern language, would be that prophecy is the highest expression of the genius of Israel; and the idealised nation is naturally identified with what is best and most characteristic in its history, and invested with the character of the ideal prophet. And again, Jehovah’s hiding of His Servant may express the truth that Israel had been providentially preserved through long ages for the sake of the spiritual endowments which made it the mouthpiece of revelation. The further idea that the real mission of Israel was concealed both from the world and from the nation itself is no doubt true, but is perhaps hardly contained in the figure.

3. The word *Israel* may be read either as a vocative or as a continuation of the predicate: “(Thou art) Israel &c.” (see R.V.). On either view it presents insuperable difficulties to those who hold that the Servant is an individual. To say that as the supreme personage of

- 4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain:
Yet surely my judgment *is* with the LORD,
And my work with my God.
- 5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the
womb *to be* his servant,
To bring Jacob again to him,
Though Israel be not gathered,
Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,
And my God shall be my strength.
- 6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest
be my servant

Israel's history he receives the name "Israel" is an arbitrary explanation, which is not to be justified by the observation that the name originally belonged to an individual. Since, however, the most important idea of the verse is contained in the words *my servant*, to which the clause *in whom I will be glorified* (better: **glorify myself**) naturally attaches itself, it is possible that *Israel* may be a gloss, and for that reason no great stress can be laid on the word as an argument for the national interpretation of the passage.

4. Although cast down for a moment by his want of success, he does not yield to despondency (cf. xlii. 4), but leaves his cause in the hands of God.

Then I said] R.V. **But I said** (with a certain emphasis on the "I"). *my judgment*] i.e. "my right," as in ch. xl. 27. *my work* should be **my recompence** (R.V.); see ch. xl. 10.

5, 6. The Servant's faith is rewarded by the revelation of a loftier mission than he had heretofore been conscious of.

though Israel be not gathered] R.V. "and that Israel be gathered unto him." We have here the same confusion between *lō'* (not) and *lō* (to him) as in ch. ix. 3. The verb for "gather," however, is used in two senses, either "to gather in" or "to take away," "gather off" (e.g. Ezek. xxxiv. 29, R.V. marg.); by adopting the latter we might retain the negative particle as in the consonantal text: **and that Israel be not swept away**. The clause, at all events, being parallel to the preceding, must express a similar idea; the rendering of A.V. proceeds on a wrong view of the construction.

yet shall I be glorious] Rather: **and I shall be (or am) honourable** (a different root from that used in v. 3). This second half of the verse seems somewhat out of place in its present context (hence it is marked by R.V. as a parenthesis). Its original position may have been (as Duhm thinks) at the end of v. 3, reading: "and so I was honourable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God was my strength."

6. *And he said*] resuming the sentence begun in v. 5. R.V. "Yea, he saith."

It is a light thing &c.] Better as R.V. **It is too light a thing &c.**

To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
 And to restore the preserved of Israel:
 I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,
 That *thou* mayest be my salvation unto the end
 of the earth.
 Thus saith the LORD, the redeemer of Israel, *and his* 7
 Holy One,
 To him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation
 abhorreth, to a servant of rulers,

But the literal translation probably is, "It is too light for thy being a servant to me that thou shouldst raise up" &c., i.e. "To restore Israel is the least part of thy vocation as my servant." The sense is not affected, and the rendering of R.V. might be defended by the analogy of Ezek. viii. 17. *raise up* here means "re-establish," just as

"build" frequently means "rebuild" (Ps. cxii. 3 &c.).
the preserved of Israel] those who survive the destruction of the state (Ezek. vi. 12, R.V. marg.).

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles] ch. xlii. 6.

that thou mayest be my salvation &c.] Rather: **that my salvation may be** &c. Comp. the N.T. application in Acts xiii. 47. The verse evidently describes an enlargement of the Servant's conception of his vocation. Previously, he had been conscious only of a mission to Israel, and in that mission the significance of the title "Servant of Jehovah" had seemed to be exhausted (v. 5). Now it is revealed to him that the name includes a higher function, that, namely, of being the mediator of salvation to all mankind. And since the greater destiny contains the less, the acceptance of this new commission delivers him from the sense of failure by which he had been oppressed (v. 4). Whatever view be taken of the Servant's personality, he speaks as the exponent of the religion of revelation; and the fact here represented is the expansion of that religion from being a national to be a universal religion. The ideal was realised only in the New Testament dispensation, so that in this as in many other respects the portrait of the Servant is an indirect prophecy of Christ. Cf. Luke ii. 32.

7—12. The Servant's account of his calling forms the basis of a series of promises; v. 7 referring to his influence on the nations, and vv. 8—12 to the narrower sphere of his activity, the restoration of Israel.

7. Israel shall be raised from the deepest degradation to the highest honour. The verse is remarkable as anticipating the main idea of ch. lii. 13—liii. 15.

to him whom man despiseth] Lit. **to the despised of soul**; i.e. "to one who is heartily despised," the "soul" being the seat of emotion. Comp. Ps. xvii. 9 ("my deadly enemies," = "they that hate me in the soul,"). In the parallel phrase **to the abhorred of people**, "people" seems to be used of men in general (the German *Leute*) as in Gen. xx. 4

- Kings shall see and arise,
 Princes also shall worship,
 Because of the LORD that *is* faithful,
And the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.
- 8 Thus saith the LORD,
 In an acceptable time have I heard thee,
 And in a day of salvation have I helped thee:
 And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant
 of the people,
 To establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate
 heritages;
- 9 That *thou* mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth;
 To *them* that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves.
 They shall feed in the ways,
 And their pastures *shall be* in all high places.
- 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst;

(“righteous folk”). The words for “despised” and “abhorred” are both peculiar in form.

a servant of rulers] of tyrants (ch. xiv. 5).

kings shall see (the exaltation of Israel) *and arise*] in amazement and reverence (cf. ch. lii. 15). *princes also shall worship*] princes (sc. shall arise) and do homage (see R.V.).

and he shall choose thee] Better, as R.V. **who hath chosen thee** (strictly, “and he hath chosen thee”; see Driver’s *Tenses*, § 76 a).

8—12. A picture of the emancipation and return of the exiles.

8. *In an acceptable time*] Better: **in a season of favour**. Cf. ch. lxi. 2, and the citation in 2 Cor. vi. 2.

for a covenant of the people] See on ch. xlii. 6.

to establish the earth &c.] Render: **restoring** (see v. 6) **the land** (of Israel), **allotting** (Deut. xxi. 16) **the desolate heritages**. The construction is precisely the same as at the beginning of xlii. 7; and presents the same ambiguity; i.e. the implicit subject of the two verbs may be either Jehovah Himself or the Servant. The former view is perhaps the more natural, since it is only by a somewhat bold figure that the repeopling &c. of the land could be attributed to the agency of the ideal Israel.

9. *That thou mayest say*] Rather, **saying** (R.V.), continuing the previous construction.

the prisoners...them that are in darkness] i.e. the exiles; cf. xlii. 7. The second half of the verse introduces a new figure, that of the flock (see ch. xl. 11) led by Jehovah, the Good Shepherd.

they shall feed in the ways] Or perhaps as LXX., **in all the ways**, wherein they go.

high places] **bare heights**; ch. xli. 18.

Neither shall the heat nor sun smite them:
 For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them,
 Even by the springs of water shall he guide them.
 And I will make all my mountains a way,
 And my highways shall be exalted.
 Behold, these shall come from far:
 And lo, these from the north and from the west;
 And these from the land of Sinim.
 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth;

11

12

13

10. *neither shall the heat...smite them*] The word for *heat* should probably be rendered the *hot wind* (Sirocco; LXX., *καύσων*). It is often taken to denote the mirage (see on ch. xxxv. 7), but that meaning is unsuitable here on account of the verb "smite."

11. The expression *my mountains* is difficult. An allusion to the mere fact of creation is not natural, and to understand it of the mountains of Palestine (as in ch. xiv. 25) would limit the image to the last stage of the return journey. Possibly the text should be amended so as to read "mountains" simply. Cf. LXX. (*τὰν ὄρος*).

my highways] See on ch. xl. 4.

12. The return of exiles from the most distant parts of the earth. *these from the land of Sinim (the Sinites)*] The last word is a hopeless enigma. As the only proper name in the verse the writer must have had some special reason for mentioning it; and the only reason that can be plausibly imagined is that *Sinim* lay on the utmost limit of his geographical horizon. This would exclude two suggested identifications: (1) the Canaanite Sinites of Gen. x. 17, and (2) Sin (Pelusium) on the nearest border of Egypt. Again, from the fact that "north" and "west" have been already mentioned we may reasonably infer that the *Sinim* must be looked for either in the far East or the far South. The former is the view of most commentators, who find in *Sinim* the name China (properly "the Chinese"). If the prophecy had been written four or five centuries later this hypothesis would be more plausible than it is. The word might be the same as the Arabic and Syriac name for China (سین), although there is a difference in the first consonant which would excite misgivings. But it is generally considered that this name is derived from that of the Tsin-dynasty, which dates from 255 B.C.; it could not therefore have reached the West in the time of the Exile. The numerous attempts to find an older Chinese origin of the word are merely wasted ingenuity. Moreover, it is inconceivable that Jewish captives had been transported to China at so early a period; and speculations about the possibility of intercourse between the Chinese and Western Asia hardly touch the question. The *Sinim* are located in the *South* by the Targ. and Vulg., which render "a Southern land"; also by Cheyne, who, in his latest work, revives a suggestion of J. D. Michaelis that Syene is meant (reading סִינִיִּים for סִינִים).

And break forth *into* singing, O mountains :
For the LORD hath comforted his people,
And will have mercy upon his afflicted.

14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me,
And my Lord hath forgotten me.

13. The lyrical conclusion of the passage on the Servant, partly resembling ch. xlv. 23.

his afflicted] See on xli. 17.

CH. XLIX. 14—L. 3. THE CONSOLATION OF ZION.

(i) vv. 14—21. In an apostrophe to Jerusalem the prophet announces the speedy return of her population and the rebuilding of her waste places. The poetry of the passage is singularly beautiful, and charged with tender emotion. Zion, the idealised city, is the wife of Jehovah, and the mother of her inhabitants. Although she now thinks of herself as rejected and barren (v. 14), she is assured of the unchanging love of her God (vv. 15, 16) which will soon be manifested in her restoration to the joy of motherhood (17—20). The ecstasy of amazement and delight with which she recognises and welcomes her children (v. 21) is finely opposed to the opening picture of her desolation and despondency. Note also the contrast between the whole conception and the fate of the “virgin daughter of Babylon” (xlvii. 8, 9).

(ii) Ch. xlix. 22—l. 3. Three oracles, confirming the promise to Zion.

(1) vv. 22, 23. On a signal from Jehovah the nations shall bring home the scattered children of Zion; nay, their kings and queens shall esteem it an honour to foster the newly-formed community.

(2) vv. 24—26. No earthly power can interpose between Jehovah and the deliverance of His people; Israel is His lawful prey, and none shall pluck them from Him (see the notes below). In thus representing the deliverance as effected by force, the prophet no doubt has in view the one nation that would not obey the signal of v. 22.

(3) l. 1—3. Lastly, there exists no legal impediment to the redemption of Israel; Jehovah has issued no sentence of formal rejection against His people, nor has anyone acquired the rights of a creditor over them (v. 1). He therefore expresses surprise that there is so little response to the promise of salvation, so little faith in His almighty power.

14. *But Zion said*] Zion is the city of Jerusalem personified (cf. v. 16) and, by a common O.T. figure, conceived as the mother of the citizens (see further on v. 21). This is no doubt the primary reference of the figure, but since the city derives its religious significance from its being the centre of the national life, Zion really represents the nation of Israel, as in ch. xl. 2. Hence the complaint of this verse is the same as was previously heard from the lips of Israel (ch. xl. 27).

my Lord] Better, as R.V. **the Lord**. The word when pointed, as here (*ʾAdônāi*), is always equivalent to Jehovah. The suggestion that it

Can a woman forget her sucking child,
That *she* should not have compassion on the son of
her womb? 15

Yea, they may forget,
Yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* 16
hands;

Thy walls *are* continually before me.

Thy children shall make haste; 17

Thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall
go forth of thee.

Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: 18

All these gather themselves together, *and* come to thee.

As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe
thee with them all, as with an ornament,

may be used in the sense of "husband" (as Gen. xviii. 12) would demand a different vocalisation (*'Ādônî*). But although the idea of Jehovah as the husband of Zion was undoubtedly present to the prophet's mind (l. 1, liv. 6) it does not emerge in this verse.

15. Jehovah's remembrance of Zion is more enduring than the strongest human affection. Even a mother's pity for an infant may fail. *yea, they may forget*] Or, should even these forget (Cheyne). *yet will I not forget thee*] See on ch. xlv. 21.

16. *I have graven thee*] Not the name merely but the picture of the city, as the next clause shews. *Thy walls* may refer to the ruined walls with their mute appeal to Jehovah's compassion, or to the plan of the new walls, which reminds Him of His purpose to rebuild them. The latter is more likely.

upon the palms of my hands] upon both hands.

17, 18. Already in vision the prophet sees the return of the exiles and calls on Zion to welcome her sons.

Instead of *Thy children* the chief ancient Versions, and the important Babylonian Codex have "Thy builders" (𐤕𐤁𐤏 for 𐤕𐤁𐤏), a sense which is recommended both by the antithesis to "thy destroyers" &c., and the connexion with the previous verse. Yet it is doubtful if the reading on the whole is preferable to that of the received text. The latter at least is true to the fundamental image of the passage, which appears again in vv. 20 f.

For *shall make haste* read in the present tense (as R.V.) *make haste. thy destroyers &c.*] The expressions almost suggest that Jerusalem was still occupied by Chaldæan troops.

18. *As I live, saith the LORD*] Jehovah's oath by Himself, ch. xlv. 23. It introduces a new, though closely related, conception; the inhabitants being compared to the bridal attire with which Zion replaces the signs of her widowhood.

- And bind them *on thee*, as a bride *doth*.
 19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land
 of thy destruction,
 Shall even now be too narrow by reason of the in-
 habitants,
 And they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.
 20 The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast
 lost the other, shall say again in thine ears,
 The place *is* too strait for me :
 Give place to me that I may dwell.
 21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten
 me these,

bind them on thee] Strictly **gird them on**. The verb is connected with the word for "girdle" in ch. iii. 20 (*qishshârîm*, A.V. "headbands"). It was evidently an ornamental girdle, possibly a part of the bridal costume (cf. Jer. ii. 32, "can...a bride forget her girdle").

19, 20. In place of her present solitude, the ideal Zion shall yet look down on a densely peopled city, whose inhabitants are embarrassed for want of room.

19. *For as for thy waste and thy desolate places and thy land that hath been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, &c.*] So R.V. But there appears to be some textual disorder, the subjects in the first half of the verse having no predicate. The R.V. gets over the difficulty by taking "thy waste places" &c. as a sort of *casus pendens*, resumed in the "thou" of the last clause; but this is a forced construction. The most probable solution is that the original conclusion of the first clause has been lost in copying (Duhm); the second would then commence with the words **For now**.

the land of thy destruction] lit. "thy land of destruction," i.e., as R.V., **thy land that hath been destroyed**.

20. *The children...other*] Lit. **the sons of thy bereavement**, i.e. those born to thee in the time of thy bereavement (see v. 21).

shall yet say in thine ears] The mother overhears the talk of her vigorous and enterprising offspring.

the place is too strait for me] Cf. 2 Ki. vi. 1.

Give place to me] This peculiar sense of the verb (usually "draw near") finds an exact parallel in Gen. xix. 9. Comp. lxx. 5, "draw near to thyself" = "stand off,"—a different, but synonymous verb.

21. Zion is bewildered at finding herself once more "a joyful mother of children" (Ps. cxiii. 9).

Who hath begotten] Rather, **Who hath borne** (in spite of the masculine gender of the verb). The peculiar figure is probably to be explained by the custom illustrated in Gen. xvi. 1 ff., xxx. 1 ff., &c. The exile was the time of Zion's barrenness; the generation of Israelites that had grown up in a foreign land are regarded as not her natural

Seeing I have lost my children, and *am* desolate,
 A captive, and removing to and fro?
 And who hath brought up these?
 Behold, I was left alone;
 These, where *had they been?*
 Thus saith the Lord GOD,
 Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles,
 And set up my standard to the people:
 And they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms,
 And thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders.
 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers,
 And their queens thy nursing mothers:
 They shall bow down to thee *with their face toward*
 the earth,
 And lick up the dust of thy feet;

22

23

children, although legally they belong to her, having been borne *for her* by a stranger.

seeing I have lost &c.] *seeing I am childless and unfruitful.* The clause immediately following (which must be rendered **exiled and put away**) introduces a conception alien to the image of the verse. Zion herself was not "exiled" but "left alone," when her children were taken from her. The words are wanting in the LXX. and may be a gloss.

these, where had they been?] If this were the sense intended, the verb "had been" (or "were") would probably require to have been expressed. But the question that Zion broods over is not *where* her children had been, but *how* she comes to have children at all, who are strangers to her. Render, therefore (with Dillmann), **these, how (is it) with them?** of what description are they? (cf. Jud. viii. 18).

22, 23. The first of the three short oracles describes the restoration of the exiles as a spontaneous act of homage on the part of the Gentiles. The conception is intermediate between that of ch. xlv. 14 ff., where the nations acknowledge the divinity of Jehovah and the religious supremacy of Israel, and that of ch. lx. 4, 8, lxvi. 20; cf. ch. xi. 11, 12. For *Gentiles* read **nations**, and for *people*, **peoples**, as R.V.

set up my standard] as a signal; see on ch. v. 26.

they shall bring thy sons in the bosom] of the garment (*sinus*) where little children were carried (Num. xi. 12). The word belongs to late Hebrew (Neh. v. 13 [E.V. lap]; Ps. cxxix. 7).

23. *thy nursing fathers*] **thy guardians**; i.e. of course, the guardians of her children (in spite of ch. lx. 16); see Num. xi. 12; 2 Ki. x. 1; Esth. ii. 7 &c. The figure appears to express the permanent relation of the kingdoms of the world to the glorified people of God.

lick up the dust of thy feet] An extravagant, but thoroughly Oriental, metaphor for abject self-humiliation (cf. Mic. vii. 17; Ps. lxxii. 9).

And thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD:
 For they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.
 24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
 Or the lawful captive delivered?

Gesenius quotes from a Persian poem the following sentiment of a prince to his conqueror: "When I shall have the good fortune to kiss the dust of thy feet, then I shall believe that fortune flatters me," &c. Comp. ch. xlv. 14, lx. 14.

for they shall not be ashamed &c.] Strictly a relative sentence, "they that wait on Whom shall not be ashamed"; which is perhaps hardly English. Render as R.V. and they that wait for me shall not be ashamed.

24—26. The emancipation of Israel is here regarded as having to be effected by force, and Jehovah pledges His omnipotence to the task. The bright picture of v. 22 does not touch the gravest difficulty of the situation, the formidable power and settled hostility of Babylon.

24. *from the mighty*] *from a hero.* *the lawful captive*] lit. **the captivity** (=captives) **of a righteous one.** This is the only sense that the phrase will properly bear; all the attempts to construe it otherwise are futile. Many authorities, however, adopt the reading of the Pesh. and Vulg. (עֲרִיק instead of צַדִּיק, as v. 25), and render: "captives of a terrible one." (1) The verse has generally been considered to be a new utterance of despair on the part of the Israelites, "Can the tyrant be made to disgorge his prey?" (Cheyne),—to which v. 25 gives an affirmative answer. On this view (which is certainly the one that first suggests itself) the substitution of *‘ārîḳ* (terrible) for *ṣaddîq* (righteous) seems imperative, since the latter expression could not possibly be applied to the Chaldeans. To suppose that by the "hero" and the "righteous one" Cyrus is meant is at variance with the whole tenor of the prophecy (xli. 25, xlv. 28, xlv. 1 ff.). (2) Dillmann on the other hand holds that the reference in v. 24 is to Jehovah, who Himself asks if any power can deprive Him of His lawful captives, the Israelites. The answer to be supplied is, "No"; and this is confirmed by v. 25: "For even the captives of a (human) hero *may* be delivered, yet will I (the Almighty) contend with" &c. This is not altogether natural; the antithesis of the *divine* hero in v. 24 and a *human* hero in v. 25 being indicated by nothing in the words. (3) A simpler view is that question and answer are related as in v. 14; the question stating a supposition in the highest degree improbable (though still conceivable), and the answer conceding the possibility in order the more strongly to assert that the idea cannot be entertained with regard to Jehovah. The sense might be paraphrased as follows: "Can the captives of a mighty man be rescued from his grasp? Yes, the captives of the mighty *may* be delivered, but I will (victoriously) maintain thy cause against thy enemies" &c. (so, apparently, Duhm). In this case also it is better to read *‘ārîḳ*, which may be used in a neutral sense as in Jer. xx. 11 (of Jehovah). The image of Israel as the prey of Jehovah has a certain resemblance to that of the lion and his prey in ch. xxxi. 4.

But thus saith the LORD,
 Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, 25
 And the prey of the terrible shall be delivered:
 For I will contend with him that contendeth with thee,
 And I will save thy children.
 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own 26
 flesh;
 And they shall be drunken with their own blood, as
 with sweet wine:
 And all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy
 Saviour
 And thy redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

Thus saith the LORD, 50
 Where *is* the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom
 I have put away?

25. Read **For** instead of *But*, and later in the verse **but** instead of *for*.

26. *I will feed them that? &c.*] Better: **I will cause thine oppressors** (the Chaldeans) **to eat their own flesh** (cf. ch. ix. 20; Zech. xi. 9). The enemies of Zion shall be consumed by internecine war—a common eschatological representation (Ezek. xxxviii. 21; Hag. ii. 22; Zech. xiv. 13).

and all flesh shall know] Comp. "And thou shalt know" at the end of the previous oracle (v. 23).

the mighty One of Jacob] See on ch. i. 24, and cf. lx. 16.

L. 1—3. The third oracle meets another doubt which must have occurred to the exiles, viz., that the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel has been broken beyond possibility of renewal. In v. 1 this fear is dispelled by the help of two analogies from common life.

Where is the bill...whom I have put away?] (better, as R.V., **where-with I have put her away**). No such document exists. Although Jehovah has had good reason to adopt this extreme measure (Jer. iii. 8), He has not done it, but has left the way open for a reconciliation. The effect of the "bill of divorcement" was to make the separation absolute and final; the woman was free to marry another, but could not after that be received back by her former husband (Deut. xxiv. 1—4). (A specimen of the form of words used by later Jews is given in Dalman's *Aramäische Dialektproben*, p. 5.) In Mohammedan law a man may divorce his wife twice and take her back without any ceremony, but a third divorce (or a triple divorce conveyed in one sentence) is final, *unless* the woman have contracted a fresh marriage in the interval and been released from it either by divorce or the death of the husband (*Koran*, Sura ii. 229 f.; see Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, chap. III.). Both the Mosaic and the Mohammedan laws accord to a

Or which of my creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you?

Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions is your mother put away.

2 Wherefore, when I came, *was there* no man?

When I called, *was there* none to answer?

Is my hand shortened at all, that *it* cannot redeem?

Or have I no power to deliver?

Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea,

I make the rivers a wilderness:

Their fish stinketh, because *there is* no water, and dieth for thirst.

husband the unrestricted right of divorce, and for this reason the Jewish custom was pronounced by our Lord to be inconsistent with the true idea of marriage and a concession to the weakness of human nature (Matt. xix. 3 ff.; Mark x. 2 ff.).

which of my creditors is it &c.] i.e. "what creditor of mine is there to whom" &c.? The selling of children into slavery in payment of a debt is another practice tolerated, though hardly approved, by the Law (Ex. xxi. 7; cf. 2 Ki. iv. 1; Neh. v. 5). Since it is inconceivable that Jehovah should have a creditor, so it is impossible that He should have surrendered His rights over His own children.

Behold, for your iniquities &c.] This is the true explanation of the slavery of the children and the divorce of the mother, and this cause is removed by the offer of forgiveness (xl. 2). It is remarkable that the prophet does not, like Hosea and Ezekiel, directly attribute sin to the ideal mother of the nation, but only to the individual Israelites, to whom this whole expostulation is addressed (cf. Hos. ii. 2).

For *have you sold yourselves* render with R.V. *were ye sold* (so again ch. lii. 3). The phrase is frequently used in the Book of Judges of the delivering of Israel into the power of its enemies (Jud. ii. 14 &c.).

2. Jehovah expresses surprise that His message of redemption (delivered through the prophet) has been received with so little enthusiasm by the people.

was there no man?] The expression occurs again in lix. 16; in both places the indefinite "man" is explained by the second member of the parallelism; here, therefore, it means "no man to answer."

Is my hand shortened at all &c.] *Is it the case that my hand is too short to redeem?* (cf. lix. 1). And the unreasonableness of such doubts as to Jehovah's power is then proved by an appeal to His mighty works in the natural sphere, probably with a special allusion to the miracles of the Exodus period.

at (by) my rebuke] Cf. ch. xvii. 13; esp. Ps. civ. 7, cvi. 9.

I make [the] rivers a wilderness] Ps. cvii. 33.

their fish stinketh &c.] Ex. vii. 18.

I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering.

3

3. Comp. Ex. x. 21 *with blackness*] with murky storm-clouds. The word, which occurs only here, denotes (like sackcloth in the next clause) the garb of mourning. Cf. Rev. vi. 12.

The strophe ends somewhat abruptly, and the thought is perhaps incomplete.

CH. L. 4—11. THE LORD'S SERVANT MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

In vv. 4—9 the Servant is again introduced, speaking of himself and his work, as in xlix. 1—6. He describes in the first place the close and intimate and continuous communion with God through which he has learned the ministry of comfort by the Divine word, and his own complete self-surrender to the voice that guides him (vv. 4, 5); next, his acceptance of the persecution and obloquy which he had to encounter in the discharge of his commission (6); and lastly he expresses his unwavering confidence in the help of Jehovah and the victory of his righteous cause and the discomfiture of all his enemies (7—9).

vv. 10, 11 are an appendix to the preceding description, drawing lessons for the encouragement of believers (v. 10) and the warning of unbelievers (v. 11). They contain expressions and even thoughts which are unlike those of the second Isaiah; and are possibly (with Duhm and Cheyne) to be regarded as a later insertion in the prophecy.

Although the word "Servant" never occurs in this passage, its resemblance to the three other "servant-passages" makes it certain that the speaker is none other than the ideal character who comes before us in xlii. 1—4, xlix. 1—6, and lii. 13—liii. 15. The passage, indeed, forms an almost indispensable link of connexion between the first two and the last of these. Whilst it takes up and developes certain ideas thrown out in the earlier sections, and in its dramatic form most resembles the second of them, its closest affinities are with lii. 13 ff. Common to both is the new conception of the Servant as a *sufferer*, here at the hands of men, there at the hands of men and God alike. In the present passage we have the Servant's own consciousness with regard to his sufferings, these being regarded from an ethical point of view as brought on him by fidelity to his Divine mission. In ch. lii. 13 ff. it is the religious aspect of them that is mainly dwelt upon: their value in the sight of God, and their efficacy for the salvation of men.—The view, therefore, that the prophet here speaks in his own name cannot be maintained, although it is no doubt the one that would be most readily suggested if the verses stood alone. So also the further question whether the Servant be the ideal Israel must be considered with due regard to the other places where the same idea is presented (see Appendix, Note I). Here it is only necessary to observe that the conception cannot in any case be applied to Israel as a whole and its sufferings from other nations. We have seen from ch. xlix. 6, 7 that the Servant has two spheres of activity, one within Israel, and the other

- 4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned,
 That *I* should know how to speak a word in season
 to *him that is* weary:
 He wakeneth morning by morning,
 He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.
- 5 The Lord God hath opened mine ear,

directed to the world at large; and there can be no reasonable doubt that the persecutions referred to belong to the narrower sphere, representing the experience of the godly minority in whom the true ideal of Israel was partly realised, in conflict with their unregenerate fellow-countrymen.

4, 5. The relation of the Servant to Jehovah is that of a favourite disciple to his master; from Him he had learned the art of persuasive and consoling speech, and to Him he daily looks for the substance of his message. Comp. xlix. 2 (the Servant's endowment with prophetic eloquence), and xlii. 3 (the gentleness of his ministry).

the tongue of the learned] **a disciples' tongue** (see ch. viii. 16), i.e. a disciplined tongue (R.V. "of them that are taught"). The stress laid on the Divine education of the Servant is connected with the fact that his ministry of consolation was almost a new departure in prophecy. In the hands of the earlier prophets the word of Jehovah had been like a hammer breaking the rock in pieces (Jer. xxiii. 29) rather than a dew reviving the spirit of the humble.

that I should know...weary] A difficult clause. The verb rendered "speak in season" (*āth*) is unknown in Hebrew. The A.V., following the Jewish interpreters, takes it to be a denominative from the word for "time" (*ēth*), but that is an impossible etymology. The LXX. gives a similar sense (τοῦ γινῶναι ἡνίκα δεῖ εἰπεῖν λόγον) but based on a different text. Of the traditional interpretations the most suitable is perhaps that of the Vulg. and Aquila (which is followed by the R.V.): **that I should know how to sustain the weary with a word**. Modern authorities who adopt this rendering support it by an Arabic verb meaning "to help," which however is not an exact philological equivalent. Another Arabic analogy has suggested the translation "water" (i.e. "refresh"). It is impossible to get beyond conjecture, although the general sense is clear.

he wakeneth (sc. my ear) *morning by morning*] (cf. xxviii. 19). A far simpler sentence results if we omit with Cheyne the first word of the Heb. (or with Duhm the first two words) as an uncorrected slip of a copyist, reading the adverbial expression with the following verb; thus: "morning by morning (or "in the morning") he wakeneth my ear to hear" &c.

as the learned] **after the manner of disciples**.

5. *hath opened mine ear*] The phrase used of the imparting of a prophetic communication in 1 Sam. ix. 15 (cf. Ps. xl. 6, different verbs).

And I was not rebellious,
 Neither turned away back.
 I gave my back to the smiters, 6
 And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair :
 I hid not my face from shame and spitting.
 For the Lord God will help me ; 7
 Therefore shall I not be confounded :
 Therefore have I set my face like a flint,
 And I know that I shall not be ashamed.
He is near that justifieth me ; 8
 Who will contend with me? let us stand together :
 Who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me.
 Behold, the Lord God will help me ; 9
 Who *is* he *that* shall condemn me?

and I was not rebellious &c.] a circumstantial clause ("I being not rebellious" &c.). Comp. Jonah i. 3 and Jer. xx. 9. The character and history of Jeremiah seem to have contributed many traits to the portrait of the "Servant of Jehovah."

6. That persecutions were to be incurred in the performance of his work is already indicated in the last words of v. 5; now the speaker declares his voluntary acquiescence in the hardships of his appointed lot.

I gave my back to the smiters] In Ps. cxxix. 3 the same figure is applied to the sufferings of Israel as a nation.

to them that plucked off the hair] of the beard (cf. Ezra ix. 3; Neh. xiii. 25); an extreme insult to an Oriental, to whom the beard is the symbol of dignity (see on ch. vii. 20).

from shame and spitting] Num. xii. 14; Deut. xxv. 9; Matt. xxvi. 67, xxvii. 30.

7. The verse is better rendered thus: **But the Lord Jehovah helps me, therefore I was not ashamed** (i.e. felt no shame); **therefore I made my face like flint** (figure for determination, cf. Ez. iii. 9), **and knew that I should not be put to shame.** For the thought cf. ch. xlii. 4.

8, 9. The consciousness of innocence is expressed (as often in the Book of Job) under the conception of a legal process.

8. He is *near that justifieth me]* Cf. ch. xlix. 4 ("my judgement is with Jehovah"); li. 5. To "justify" is, as nearly always, to declare in the right; so "condemn" in v. 9 is to pronounce in the wrong.

who will contend with me?] cf. Job xiii. 19.

stand together] **stand forth together** (as xlvii. 12, 13).

who is mine adversary?] lit. "the master of my cause" (dominus litis).

A similar expression is used in Ex. xxiv. 14.

9. *who is he that shall condemn me?]* Comp. Rom. viii. 33 f.

Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

- 10 Who *is* among you that feareth the LORD,
That obeyeth the voice of his servant,
That walketh *in* darkness, and hath no light?
Let him trust in the name of the LORD,
And stay upon his God.
- 11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass *your-*
selves about with sparks:

wax old (better, **be worn out**) *as a garment; the moth* &c.] Common images of gradual but inevitable destruction (cf. ch. li. 6, 8; Ps. xxxix. 11, cii. 26; Job xiii. 28 &c.).

Two striking parallels to the latter part of this discourse occur in the Book of Jeremiah. See ch. xvii. 17 f.; "Thou art my refuge in the day of evil. Let them be ashamed that persecute me, but let not me be ashamed...bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction": and xx. 7, 11 ff.: "I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me..." "But the Lord is with me as a mighty one and a terrible; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed" &c. Cf. also Ps. xxii. 6—21.

10, 11. A double message of encouragement and warning based on the preceding soliloquy of the Servant. It seems evident that the Servant here is regarded as the nucleus of the godly party who are addressed in v. 10; in other words, as a personification of the true Israel which is in process of being separated from the unbelieving part of the nation. These last are addressed in v. 11 as opponents and persecutors of the faithful Israelites.

10. Those who fear the Lord are exhorted to imitate the Servant's trust in God.

that obeyeth the voice of his servant] (lit. "that hearkeneth to" &c.). The LXX. reads "let him hearken," which certainly gives a better balanced verse: "Whoso among you feareth Jehovah, let him hearken" &c. The reference is not merely to the words just spoken (vv. 4—9), but to the whole revelation of which the Servant is the organ.

that walketh] Better, as R.V., **he that walketh**—commencing a new sentence.

in darkness] lit. "in dark places"; i.e. in trouble.

let him trust &c.] Cf. ch. xxvi. 4; Hab. ii. 4.

11. *that compass yourselves about with sparks*] Lit. as R.V., **that gird yourselves about with firebrands** (cf. Prov. xxvi. 18). The verb "gird" hardly suits the metaphor; hence it is better with many authorities to change מֵאֲוִיר into מֵאֵשׁ ("that kindle"). "Fire" and "firebrands" are both images for the machinations of the ungodly party against the true servants of Jehovah (cf. Ps. vii. 13; Eph. vi. 16).

Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks *that*
ye have kindled.

This shall ye have of mine hand;

Ye shall lie down in sorrow.

walk in the light &c.] Rather: **walk into the flame of your fire &c.**
Their mischievous designs shall recoil on themselves (Ps. vii. 15 f.).

this shall ye have of mine hand] Better: **from my hand is this**
(appointed) for you.

ye shall lie down in sorrow] perhaps: **in the place of torment**; see
on ch. lxi. 24.

CH. LI. 1—16. ENCOURAGEMENTS ADDRESSED TO TRUE ISRAELITES.

The strain of consolation, which was interrupted by the soliloquy of the Servant at ch. l. 4, is now resumed, and is continued till we reach the fourth and last of the Servant-passages, lii. 13—liii. 12. Throughout this long passage (li. 1—lii. 12) the prophet's thoughts are occupied with the near prospect of deliverance, and his high-strung emotion finds vent in a series of short impassioned oracles, mostly of a lyrical character. These may be divided into two groups, each consisting of three oracles. While those of the second group (li. 17—lii. 12) are addressed to the prostrate and desolate Zion, the first (li. 1—16) contains words of cheer to the faithful but timid hearts in whom the prophet's message had found an entrance. This section shews some points of contact with the preceding descriptions of the Servant, and the line of thought was probably influenced by the last of these, in l. 4—9. The contents of the section are as follows:—

i. *vv.* 1—8. A glowing and animated appeal to the believing exiles to put away the fears and misgivings which hinder their full acceptance of the promise of salvation. The thrice-repeated "Hearken to me" (see, however, on *v.* 4) indicates a division into three strophes. (1) The first draws a lesson of encouragement from the example of the solitary patriarch Abraham, who by the blessing of Jehovah became the progenitor of a great nation. Let the true-hearted believers, therefore, take courage, in spite of the fewness of their number, for the same blessing rests on them, and will transform the waste places of Zion into a scene of joy and gladness (*vv.* 1—3). (2) The next strophe directs the hope of the loyal Israelites to the glorious future that belongs to those who wait for Jehovah's salvation; though heaven and earth pass away that world-wide salvation is imperishable and eternal (*vv.* 4—6). (3) The last strophe, re-echoing one of the voices of the Prologue (xl. 6—8), reminds the exiles that the reproach they fear is that of frail and short-lived mortals, while the salvation they hope for endures for ever.

ii. *vv.* 9, 10. Here for a moment the prophetic discourse is interrupted by a magnificent apostrophe to the "arm" of Jehovah. The speakers are most probably those to whom the previous words were

- 51 Harken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye
that seek the LORD:
Look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn,
And to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged.
- 2 Look unto Abraham your father,
And unto Sarah *that* bare you:
For I called him alone,
And blessed him, and increased him.
- 3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion:

addressed. As if all their doubts had been swept away by the impressive appeals to which they have listened, their impatience breaks forth in this impetuous challenge to Jehovah to reveal His power as in the days of old. (*vv. 11* has been inserted from ch. xxxv. 10.)

iii. *vv. 12—16*. The Divine voice is again heard (in answer to the people's prayer). Since their comforter is Jehovah Himself, the Creator of heaven and earth, how unreasonable is their craven fear of their cruel oppressors! (*vv. 12, 13*). Towards the close, however, the connexion becomes very obscure (see the notes).

1—3. The opening exhortation alludes to a difficulty naturally arising in the minds of believing exiles, viz., that they were too few in number to inherit the glorious promises made to them. This is removed by pointing to the marvellous increase of the nation from a single patriarchal family. There is a curious coincidence between this passage and Ezek. xxxiii. 24, where a parallel line of reasoning, on the part of the ungodly remnant left in the land of Canaan, is denounced by the prophet as impious. The history of Abraham and the religious lessons to be drawn from it must have been familiar in the age of the Captivity.

1. *ye that follow after* (lit. "pursue") *righteousness*] "Righteousness" here means, not "salvation" (as in *vv. 5, 6, 8*), but righteousness in conduct, a way of life in accordance with the will of God (as *v. 7*); cf. Prov. xv. 9; Rom. ix. 30 f.

look unto the rock &c.] The ancestors of the nation are compared to a quarry, the Israelites to the stones hewn from it,—a peculiar image found nowhere else. The word for *hole* does not occur again in the O.T.; but a noun from the same root is found in the first line of the Siloam Inscription with the sense of "perforation" or "excavation."

2. The explanation of the figure.

I called him alone] lit. "as one," i.e. a single individual.

blessed him, and increased him] Cf. Gen. xii. 2, 3, xxii. 17. The strict rendering of the Massoretic text would be "that I might bless" &c.; but the verbs should no doubt be pointed as consec. impfs. Without completing the analogy, the prophet proceeds at once in the next verse to comfort the spiritual children of Abraham with the assurance of the restoration of Zion.

3. *shall comfort...will comfort...will make*] lit. as R.V. *hath comforted...hath made* (perf. of certainty).

He will comfort all her waste places ;
 And he will make her wilderness like Eden,
 And her desert like the garden of the LORD ;
 Joy and gladness shall be found therein,
 Thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.
 Hearken unto me, my people ;
 And give ear unto me, O my nation :
 For a law shall proceed from me,
 And I will make my judgment to rest for a light of
 the people.
 My righteousness *is* near ; my salvation is gone forth, 5
 And mine arms shall judge the people ;

like the garden of the LORD] Gen. xiii. 10; cf. Ezek. xxviii. 13, xxxi. 8 f.

joy and gladness &c.] Cf. Jer. xxxiii. 11.

4—6. The universal extension of the true religion is the second ground of comfort which the prophet is commissioned to offer to his fellow believers. The language of vv. 4, 5 is obviously moulded on that of ch. xlii. 1—4; the functions there assigned to the Servant of the Lord are here assumed by Jehovah Himself. At the same time the thought is implied that the restored Israel is to be the bearer of salvation to the world at large, and thus the further idea is suggested that the ideal represented by the Servant will be realised by the people of Israel when it emerges purified from the discipline of the Captivity.

4. *Hearken unto me*] Better as R.V. *Attend unto me*, the verb being different from that used in vv. 1 and 7.

a law shall proceed from me] See ch. ii. 3 ("for out of Zion shall go forth *Tôrāh*"). For *a law* (*tôrāh*) read, as usual, *instruction*. The word *judgment* in the next line is probably to be rendered "religion" as in xlii. 1, 3, 4 (see on xlii. 1).

The verb rendered "make to rest" has three meanings in the O.T. (a) to "cause to rest" (Jer. xxxi. 2) or "be at rest" (ch. xxxiv. 14), (b) to "set in commotion" (Jer. l. 34, see on v. 15 below), and (c) to "do a thing in the twinkling of an eye" (Jer. xlix. 19). Of these (a) is alone possible in the present connexion, though hardly quite suitable; the sense "establish," given by some critics, seems to have no sufficient support. By the LXX. the word is taken with v. 5, and in the sense (c), and this suggests the true reading, although it requires a slight modification of the following word. The construction would be the same as in Jer. xlix. 19, and the rendering perhaps, "Suddenly I bring near my righteousness." The word is at all events superfluous in v. 4, the last clause of which reads simply: *and my judgement for a light of the peoples* (cf. xlix. 6).

5. *My righteousness is near*] See the last note and cf. ch. xlvi. 13. For *people* read *peoples* (as R.V.).

- The isles shall wait upon me,
 And on mine arm shall they trust.
- 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 And look upon the earth beneath:
 For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,
 And the earth shall wax old like a garment,
 And they that dwell therein shall die in like manner:
 But my salvation shall be for ever,
 And my righteousness shall not be abolished.
- 7 Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness,
 The people in whose heart *is* my law;
 Fear ye not the reproach of men,
 Neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

the isles shall wait upon me] Cf. xlii. 4.

on mine arm] i.e. "on my strength," my protection (xxxiii. 2).

6. From the thought of the universality of religion the prophet rises to that of its eternity, which is here expressed by a contrast of surprising boldness between the "things which are seen" and the "things which are not seen." The whole visible creation, the heavens above and the earth beneath, are transitory, but Jehovah's salvation endures for ever.

the heavens shall vanish away (or "be dissolved") *like smoke*] To feel the force of the metaphor we must bear in mind the ancient conception of the "firmament" as a solid vault overarching the earth. The word for "vanish away" is connected with noun rendered "rotten rags" in Jer. xxxviii. 11 f.

wax old like a garment] See on ch. l. 9, from which the expression is taken. Cf. also Ps. cii. 26.

shall die in like manner] Rather, as R.V. marg., **shall die like gnats**. The word *kēn* does not occur elsewhere in this sense, unless Num. xiii. 33 be an instance, which is doubtful. It might be a collective noun corresponding to the fem. *kinnāh* (noun of unity = a single gnat), found in Talmudic Hebrew. Several commentators, however, think it necessary to read *kinnēm* (also a collective), a word used in Ex. viii. 16—18 of the "lice" of Egypt. The Ancient Versions and the Jewish interpreters explain as E.V., taking *kēn* to be the common particle "so."

salvation and *righteousness* are practically synonymous, as often. See Appendix, Note II.

7, 8. In the hope of this everlasting salvation the true Israelites may well endure for a season the reproach of men.

7. To *know righteousness* does not differ in meaning from "follow after righteousness" in v. 1. Both expressions refer to righteousness in the ethical sense; there it is represented as an ideal steadily pursued, here as a rule of life apprehended by the heart and conscience. This inward possession of righteousness is the earnest of the external righteousness, the vindication of right, spoken of in vv. 6 and 8.

the people in whose heart is my instruction] Cf. Jer. xxxi. 33.

For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, 8
And the worm shall eat them like wool:
But my righteousness shall be for ever,
And my salvation from generation to generation.

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; 9
Awake, as *in* the ancient days, *in* the generations of old.
Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, *and* wounded
the dragon?

8. *For the moth &c.*] See again ch. l. 9; another indication that the Servant is the type of the true Israel, and hence an example to individual Israelites.

The word rendered "worm" (*šāš*, cf. the Greek *σῆς*) means strictly "moth." Although common in Semitic, it is found only here in Hebr.

9, 10. These verses are addressed to Jehovah, either by the prophet himself, or by the community of true Israelites. It is difficult to decide between these two views, but the dramatic unity of the passage is best preserved if we adopt the latter, taking vv. 9, 10 as a prayer called forth by the previous exhortation, and vv. 12 ff. as the Divine answer to this prayer.

The imagery of the verses is obviously mythological. It rests on the conception of a conflict in days long past between Jehovah and the monsters called Rahab and the Dragon. Now both these names came to be used as symbols of Egypt (see on ch. xxx. 7, and xxvii. 1); and most commentators have thought that this is the case here, the historic reference being to the humiliation of Egypt, and the dividing of the Red Sea in the days of Moses. But it is doubtful if this interpretation *exhausts* the significance of the passage. The prophet seems to make direct use of current mythological representations, as is frequently done by the author of the Book of Job (see the notes on iii. 8, ix. 13, xxvi. 13 in Davidson's *Book of Job*). And if this be so there cannot be much doubt as to the nature of the myth in question. It is most probably a Hebrew variation of the Babylonian creation-hymn, according to which the creation of the world was preceded by a conflict between the God of light and order and the monsters that symbolise the dark powers of Chaos (so Duhm; see also Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, pp. 30 ff.). The fundamental idea of the verses would therefore seem to lie in the analogy between the original creation of the material world, and the restoration of the moral order of the universe, which has been disturbed by the reign of brute force in the Babylonian empire (cf. v. 16). At the same time, the undoubted allusion to the Exodus in 10b, shows that the historical application of the imagery was present to the mind of the prophet (see below).

9. *put on strength*] Lit. "clothe thyself with strength," as Ps. xciii. 1.

The *arm of the LORD* is apostrophised, as the symbol of His might, possibly with a reference back to v. 5.

that hath cut Rahab &c.] R.V. that cut Rahab in pieces, that

- 10 *Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters
of the great deep;
That hath made the depths of the sea a way for the
ransomed to pass over?*
- 11 *Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return,
And come with singing unto Zion;
And everlasting joy shall be upon their head:
They shall obtain gladness and joy;
And sorrow and mourning shall flee away.*

pierced the dragon. The verb "cut" is strictly "hewed" or "split." *Rahab* is the sea-monster (ch. xxx. 7); and the "dragon" (*tannin*) probably one of the "helpers of Rahab" (Job ix. 13); both together represent the chaotic elements from whose dominion the habitable world had to be recovered; hence the line expresses poetically the same thought as the following "Art thou not it which dried up the sea" &c. ? The original mythical emblem survives in one of the most beautiful personifications of O.T. poetry, the comparison of the sea to a restless, unruly creature, waging impotent war with heaven, and seeking to devour the land, but a creature whom Jehovah holds completely in His power, now stirring it to fury (see v. 15) by His rebuke, and again stilling its commotions.

10. *the great deep*] (Gen. vii. 11; Am. vii. 4; Ps. xxxvi. 6) is the primeval ocean of Gen. i. 2, out of which the dry land appeared. The Hebrew (*tēhôm*) is connected etymologically with *Tiāmat*, the name of the Chaos-monster in the Babylonian creation tablets.

a way for the ransomed to pass over] The reference to the Exodus is here unmistakeable. The transition is explained by the fact that every exhibition of Jehovah's power over the sea was regarded as a repetition on a smaller scale of the original miracle of creation. Both alike are illustrations of what the "arm of the Lord" can do, and of the great miracle of redemption to which the prophet looks forward.

11. For *Therefore* render as R.V. **And**. The verse is almost verbally identical with xxxv. 10, which is clearly its original setting. Here its connexion with what precedes is somewhat loose, and since ch. xxxv. is of more recent date than this prophecy, the verse must have been transferred by a copyist.

12—16. Jehovah again speaks as the comforter of His people. That the passage is a direct answer to the importunate appeal of vv. 9 f., seems probable, although it cannot be confidently affirmed; it is at all events virtually an answer. A point of contact might be found in Jehovah's assertion of His power over the sea in v. 15; but the connexion of ideas in the last three verses is difficult to make out, and the text itself probably confused.

12, 13. An expostulation with the exiles, who having the Almighty Creator for their God, live in constant terror of being destroyed by their oppressors.

I, *even I, am* he that comforteth you: 12
 Who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man
that shall die,
 And of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass;
 And forgettest the LORD thy Maker, 13
 That hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the
 foundations of the earth;
 And hast feared continually every day because of the
 fury of the oppressor,
 As if he were ready to destroy?
 And where *is* the fury of the oppressor?
 The captive exile hasteneth that *he* may be loosed, 14
 And that he should not die in the pit,

12. *I am he that comforteth you*] Cf. xl. 1, xlix. 13. The Israelites are here addressed as individuals; this gives place immediately to the feminine collective, *Who art thou &c.?* and this again in v. 13 to the masc. sing. The rhetorical question means simply "How is it that thou fearest" &c.? (on the use of the consec. impf. see Davidson's *Syntax* § 51. R. 3). For *made as grass* we may translate "given up (to destruction) as grass" (cf. ch. xl. 6).

13. *And forgettest the LORD*] Not in the sense of apostatising from Him (as ch. xvii. 10 and often), but of failing to realise His omnipotence as the Creator of all things (see ch. xlix. 14).

that hath stretched forth the heavens &c.] Cf. xl. 22, xlii. 5, xliv. 24, xlv. 12.

and hast feared...day] Better as R.V. and fearest continually all the day. The *oppressor* is of course the Chaldaean Empire (see ch. xlvii. 6), a proof that this part of the book was not written after the fall of Babylon.

as if he were ready to destroy] R.V. when he maketh ready to destroy; lit. "aims (his arrow) to destroy," the verb being used technically of an archer directing his arrow; so Ps. xxi. 13, cf. Ps. vii. 13, xi. 2.

and where is the fury of the oppressor?] Cf. ch. xxxiii. 18. The question gives a weak ending to the verse, and indeed both in this clause and the preceding the soundness of the text is doubtful.

14. The received text is probably best rendered as follows: **Speedily shall the crouching (prisoner) be set free, and he shall not die (and go down) to the pit, nor shall his bread fail** (see R.V.); Israel in exile being compared to a prisoner in danger of death through starvation. The image reminds us of Jeremiah in the dungeon (xxxviii. 9, 10). The verse is full of obscurities, and its connexion with what precedes is of the loosest kind. The LXX. gives what is obviously a conjectural rendering, and it is not unlikely that the Hebr. represents another attempt to restore an illegible text.

Nor that his bread should fail.

15 But I *am* the LORD thy God,
That divided the sea, whose waves roared:
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.

16 And I have put my words in thy mouth,
And have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,
That I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations
of the earth,
And say unto Zion, Thou *art* my people.

15, 16. These verses contain a remarkable number of resemblances to other passages (see below). *v.* 15, apart from the introductory words, occurs in Jer. xxxi. 35, though it is doubtful to which passage it originally belongs. Giesebrecht (on Jeremiah) unhesitatingly pronounces it a citation from this verse.

15. *that divided the sea &c.*] Render with R.V. which stirreth up (see on *v.* 4) the sea so that the waves thereof roar (cf. Job xxvi. 12).

The idea is parallel with that of *vv.* 9 f., being an illustration of Jehovah's power over the elements. He can, as it were, play with the sea, for His stirring it up to fury implies that He is able to restrain it, and at the right time to still it again.

the LORD of hosts is his name] Chs. xlvii. 4, xlviii. 2, liv. 5.

16. *I have put my words in thy mouth*] recurring in ch. lix. 21.

covered thee in the shadow of mine hand] Taken almost exactly from xlix. 2.

that I may plant &c.] This is no doubt the right translation, not "that thou mayest plant" (lit. "to plant"). The metaphor of "planting" the heavens is strange; some critics substitute "to stretch forth" (changing a letter), as in *v.* 13, with which likewise the following words correspond.

The verse is remarkable in two respects. (1) It throws an important light on the idea of the Servant of the Lord. Language which is elsewhere used of the Servant is here applied to Israel, to whom the verse is undoubtedly addressed. This would be a strong confirmation of the theory that the Servant is in some sense a personification of Israel. (2) The conception of a new moral universe about to be created is partly anticipated both in *v.* 6 (where the transitoriness of the present world is asserted), and in *vv.* 9 f. (see the notes above). This verse, however, adds the further idea that the new creation is the ultimate goal of God's dealings with Israel, whose religious mission culminates in a universal and everlasting salvation.

CH. LI. 17—LII. 12. THE LORD WILL TURN THE CAPTIVITY OF ZION.

The three oracles into which this passage naturally falls are these:—

(1) *vv.* 17—23. The prophet, returning to the thought with which the book opens (ch. xl. 2), announces that the period of Jerusalem's

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, 17
Which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup
of his fury;
Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling,
and wrung them out.
There is none to guide her among all the sons whom 18
she hath brought forth;

degradation has expired. The city is figured as a woman lying prostrate and senseless, intoxicated with the cup of the Lord's indignation which she has drunk to the dregs, her sons unable to help her (17—20). But the cup is now taken from her and passed to the enemies who had oppressed and insulted her (21—23).

(2) lii. 1—6. In a new apostrophe, the image is carried on; let Zion lay aside her soiled raiment, and the emblems of her slavery, and put on her holiday attire (1, 2). Jehovah will no longer endure that His name should be blasphemed through the banishment of His people (3—6).

(3) vv. 7—12. A description of the triumphal return of Jehovah to Zion, obviously based on the last section of the Prologue (ch. xl. 9—11). The writer pictures the scene of joy within the city when the heralds of the King arrive (7, 8); he calls on the waste places of Jerusalem to break forth into singing (9, 10); and finally, turning to the exiles (as in xlviii. 20 f.) he summons them to hasten their escape from the land of their captivity (11, 12).

17—20. The description of Jerusalem's degradation. The rhythm is that of the *qinah*, and the resemblances to the book of Lamentations are so striking that Ewald has conjectured that the passage is taken from one of the elegies composed during the Exile.

Awake] Better **Arouse thee** (Cheyne); the verb being a reflexive as distinct from the simple "Awake" of lii. 1 (and li. 9).

which hast drunk...the cup of his fury] The image of the cup of the Divine wrath originated in Jeremiah's great vision of judgement (ch. xxv. 15 ff.), where the prophet hands the cup to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. Cf. also Jer. xlix. 12; Hab. ii. 16; Ezek. xxiii. 31—34; Lam. iv. 21; Obad. 16; Rev. xiv. 10.

the dregs of the cup of trembling] R.V. **the bowl of the cup of staggering**. "Dregs" is a mistaken Jewish rendering of a word (*qubba'ath*), found only here and in v. 22. It means undoubtedly a "bowl" or "chalice," and the pleonasm "bowl of the cup" has probably arisen through the common word for cup being added as an explanatory gloss.

of trembling] of intoxication. Ps. lx. 3 (A.V. "wine of astonishment").

and *wrung them out*] **drained** (cf. Ezek. xxiii. 34)—an asyndetic construction in the Hebr.—"hast drunk, hast drained," i.e. "hast drunk to the dregs." The whole clause reads:—

**Thou who hast drunk from Jehovah's hand—the cup of His wrath,
The chalice of intoxication—hast thou drunk to the dregs.**

Neither *is there any* that taketh her by the hand of all the sons *that* she hath brought up.

19 These two *things* are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee?

Desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword:

By whom shall I comfort thee?

20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull *in* a net:

They are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, And drunken, but not with wine:

22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, And thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people,

19. *These two things*] (ch. xlvii. 9), i.e. two kinds of calamities; namely, **devastation and destruction** on land and city; **famine and sword** on the inhabitants.

who shall be sorry for thee] Better **who condoles with thee** (Jer. xv. 5; Nah. iii. 7), i.e. "thou hast no sympathizers." To "condole" is in Hebr. to shake the head (cf. Jer. xvi. 5; Job ii. 11, xlii. 11 &c.), a similar gesture, expressed by a different verb, denotes contempt (see on ch. xxxvii. 22).

by whom shall I comfort thee?] Rather: **how** (lit. who) **shall I comfort thee?** The idiom cannot be reproduced exactly; see Am. vii. 2, 5 and comp. Davidson's *Synt.* § 8 R. 1 (where it is suggested that the peculiar use of the pronoun may be provincial or colloquial). The Ancient Versions, however, read the third person, which is far easier; "who comforts thee?"

20. *Thy sons have swooned*] lit. "were shrouded,"—a usual oriental metaphor (Am. viii. 13; Jon. iv. 8; Nah. iii. 11). For the idea cf. Lam. ii. 11, 19, 21. *at the head of all the streets*] Lam. ii. 19, iv. 1.

as a wild bull in a net] R.V., rightly, **as an antelope** (Deut. xiv. 5) **in a net**, exhausted by its vain struggles to get free.

they are full of the fury &c.] The children have drunk of the same cup as their mother.

21—23. The message of comfort.

21. *hear now this*] See ch. xlvii. 8.

drunken, but not with wine] Cf. ch. xxix. 9.

22. *thy Lord the LORD*] **thy Lord Jehovah**. It is in cases like this that we are made to feel the inconvenience arising from the Jewish reluctance to pronounce the sacred Name Yahveh.

I have taken] Better **I take** (a perf. of instant action, as 1 Sam. ii. 16).

Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling,

Even the dregs of the cup of my fury;

Thou shalt no more drink it again:

But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict ²³ thee;

Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over:

And thou hast laid thy body as the ground,

And as the street, to them that went over.

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion;

52

Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city:

For henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

the cup of trembling...fury] the cup of intoxication, the chalice of mine indignation (see on v. 17).

23. *them that afflict thee]* thy tormentors. The word occurs three times in the Lamentations (i. 5, 12, iii. 32).

to thy soul] i.e. "to thyself," although without special emphasis (cf. Ps. iii. 2, xi. 1).

Bow down, that we may go over] The figure is taken from the Eastern custom of treading or even riding on the backs of conquered enemies. Comp. Lane's account of the Mohammedan ceremony of the *Dooseh* or "Treading," as he witnessed it at Cairo in 1834; when the Sheikh of the Saadiyeh dervishes, mounted on horseback, rode over the prostrate bodies of a large number of dervishes. (See *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, pp. 417 f., 432 f. [Ed. 1890].)

and thou hast laid &c.] so that thou madest thy back as the earth. Gesenius cites in illustration an Arabic proverb: "To him who pleases me, I will be earth."

Ch. lii. 1, 2. Here the prophet's imagination takes a higher flight. The cup of indignation having finally passed from her hands, Jerusalem is summoned to shake off her stupor, and array herself in garments befitting her dignity as the bride of Jehovah. The description is influenced by the contrast (evidently intentional) to the taunt-song on the "daughter of Babylon" (ch. xlvii. 1 ff.).

put on thy strength] Cf. ch. li. 9.

the holy city] as ch. xlviii. 2.

for...there shall no more come &c.] Note the correspondence with xlvii. 1, 5.

the uncircumcised and the unclean] i.e. not foreigners generally (as Joel iii. 17), as if the passage expressed the exclusiveness of later

- 2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, *and* sit down, O Jerusalem:
Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.
- 3 For thus saith the LORD,
Ye have sold yourselves for nought;
And ye shall be redeemed without money.
- 4 For thus saith the Lord God,
My people went down aforetime *into* Egypt to sojourn there;
And the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.
- 5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD,

Judaism, but the "destroyers" and "wasters" who at present desecrate her soil; see on xlix. 17. Cf. Nah. i. 15; Zech. ix. 8.

2. *arise and sit down*] The meaning might be, "arise from the dust, and sit on thy throne,"—a contrast to xlvii. 1.

loose thyself...neck] Better perhaps **loose for thee the bonds** &c.; the reflexive verb having the same force as an ethical dative. The alternative rendering of R.V. marg. "the bands of thy neck are loosed" represents the Hebrew consonantal text. The Qerê, however, is here supported by the Ancient Versions, and is undoubtedly to be preferred.

3—6. There is here a sudden change both in form and subject. The rhythmic structure of the preceding verses gives place to prose, and the figure of Jerusalem arising from the dust is altogether abandoned. Jehovah is represented as deliberating with Himself on the religious situation, so injurious to His honour, brought about by the unprecedented calamities of His people (vv. 4, 5), and as resolving to end it by their deliverance (6). It is doubtful if the passage was the original sequel to vv. 1, 2.

3. *Ye have sold yourselves*] R.V. **Ye were sold**; see on ch. l. 1; cf. Ps. xliv. 12.

redeemed without money] Cf. ch. xlv. 13. Jehovah *gained* nothing by delivering Israel into the hand of its enemies, and He *asks* nothing as the price of its redemption.

4. For *aforetime* render with R.V. **at the first**, at the outset of its history.

without cause] i.e. probably, "for nought," without having acquired any right over Israel by services rendered to Jehovah. The meaning can hardly be that Israel suffered innocently.

5. *Now therefore*] Rather, **But now**, accentuating the gravity of the present situation. Exile and oppression were indeed no new experiences for Israel (v. 4), but no such overwhelming disaster as this had ever befallen it hitherto.

what have I here &c.] The sentence may be variously understood. The main idea obviously is that the state of things described in what follows is not to be endured, being inconsistent with the honour of

That my people is taken away for nought?

They that rule over them make *them* to howl, saith the LORD;

And my name continually every day *is* blasphemed.

Therefore my people shall know my name: 6

Therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he that doth speak: behold, *it is I*.

Jehovah. The formula "What is there to me?" expresses a strong sense of incongruity between what is and what ought to be (see iii. 15, xxii. 1, 16), and we may render either, "What am I about (xxii. 1) here (in Babylonia)?" or, more generally, "What do I find here?" i.e. in the existing position of affairs, as contrasted with the historic parallels in v. 4. The last is perhaps to be preferred. The meaning can hardly be, "What have I to do here (ch. xxii. 16) now that my people is taken away?"

that (better **for**) *my people is taken away*] destroyed outright (ch. liii. 8).

they that rule over them (the Chaldeans) *make them to howl* (R.V. **do howl**)] The R.V. rightly avoids the causative sense of the verb, which has no support in usage. On the other hand, it is nowhere else used of a shout of exultation, as it must be here; comp. with Gesenius and others, "*laetis ululare triumphis*" (Lucan, 6, 261). In Syriac also the word appears occasionally to undergo a similar modification.

my name...is blasphemed] lit. **despised**. (The form should probably be pointed as part. Pual.) The meaning is that the calamities of Israel were attributed by the heathen to the impotence of their God, and thus the majesty of Jehovah was impaired,—a thought frequently expressed by Ezekiel (see Ezek. xxxvi. 20 &c.). The words are cited in Rom. ii. 24.

continually all the day] (R.V.), as ch. li. 13.

6. The contempt thus brought on His name is the crowning motive of Jehovah's interposition,—another point of affinity with Ezekiel (see xxxvi. 21).

my people shall know my name] i.e. shall know by experience what My name imports; comp. "shall know that I am Jehovah," in Ezekiel (xx. 42, 44 and often). The second *therefore*, followed by no new verb, is both superfluous and difficult and should probably be omitted, with LXX.

that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I] The last words "behold me" are hardly to be taken as obj. of the verb "speak"; they simply repeat the sense of the preceding clause: "They shall know that it is I who speak; here am I" (cf. Ezek. v. 13).

7—12. The return of Jehovah to Zion.

7 Describes, in vivid pictorial imagery taken from ch. xl. 9, the arrival in Jerusalem of the first tidings of the deliverance from Babylon and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Part of the verse occurs in Nah. i. 15.

- 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace;
That bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation;
That saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!
- 8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice;
With the voice together shall they sing:
For they shall see eye to eye,
When the LORD shall bring again Zion.
- 9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem:

of him that bringeth good tidings] The *mēbassēr* (see on xl. 9 and cf. xli. 27) is one of the prophet's *dramatis personæ*, occupying a position somewhat analogous to that of "the fugitive" in the Book of Ezekiel (xxiv. 26 f., xxxiii. 21 f.). He is the "evangelist," the herald of salvation whose single function is to announce to Zion the speedy advent of her God. He is an ideal creation of the writer's mind, and the conception fluctuates between that of an individual (as here and xli. 27) and of a company (in xl. 9). In St Paul's application of the figure (Rom. x. 15) it becomes a type of the gospel ministry.

Thy God reigneth] Rather, **thy God hath become king**, has established His everlasting kingdom (cf. ch. xxiv. 23; Ps. xciii. 1, xcvi. 1).

8. *Thy watchmen...sing]* Render, **Hark, thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, together do they sing** (see R.V.). Although the prophets are often called "watchmen" (ch. lvi. 10; Hab. ii. 1; Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. xxxiii. 2 ff.) there is no reason to suppose that they are referred to here. Prophets are no longer required after the herald of salvation has arrived and Jehovah Himself is at hand. The word is used in its ordinary sense of the watchmen posted on the city walls, who are naturally represented as the first to see and announce the actual approach of the King.

for they shall see &c.] Rather, **for eye to eye do they look upon Jehovah's return to Zion**. The expression *eye to eye* occurs only once again, in Num. xiv. 14, where Jehovah is said to be "seen eye to eye" in Israel; i.e. He is visibly present there (cf. Jer. xxxii. 4, "his eyes shall look on the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar"). The idea here must be similar; Jehovah shall be seen in person when He comes to Zion, as closely and clearly as when two men look one another in the face. The phrase certainly has not in Hebr. the sense of harmony and unity which it has come to bear in English. But it can hardly mean merely that the watchmen shall form a dense throng, looking *each other* in the face! That is a thought quite irrelevant in the context.

9. *Break forth into joy, sing...]* Render, **Break forth into singing** (lit. "Break forth, sing"). Cf. xlv. 23.

For the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath re-deemed Jerusalem.

The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all ¹⁰ the nations;

And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, ¹¹ touch no unclean thing;

Go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

For ye shall not go out with haste,

Nor go by flight:

For the LORD will go before you;

And the God of Israel *will be* your rereward.

12

the LORD hath comforted his people] li. 3.

10. Here (if not already in v. 9) the prophet withdraws his gaze from the future, and describes Jehovah as preparing Himself for the conflict which leads to the joyous scene of vv. 7 f.

hath made bare his holy arm] throwing back the sleeveless upper garment from the right shoulder, in readiness for action: δεξιὸν ὤμων γυμνὸν ἔχων ἐν τῇ μάχῃ (Arrian, *Alex.* 5. 18, quoted by Dillmann). See the contrasted metaphor in Ps. lxxiv. 11. *his holy arm* means

"His divine arm" (Ps. xcvi. 1). The "arm" of Jehovah, as ch. li. 9 (cf. also liii. 1).

shall see the salvation (i.e. the deliverance or "victory") of our God] a different idea from that of xlv. 22.

11, 12. A summons to the exiles to prepare for their departure from Babylon (cf. xlviii. 20, 21). These are to accompany Jehovah in his triumphal "return to Zion" (see on ch. xl. 10, 11).

go ye out from thence] from Babylon; "in this section (vv. 7—12) the prophet places himself in spirit at Jerusalem" (Cheyne).

touch no unclean thing] They are to "purify themselves" (see below) as those who take part in a religious procession. The stress laid on ceremonial purity in this verse is an exceptional feature in the prophecy.

be ye clean (cleanse yourselves ye) that bear the vessels of the LORD] As in the exodus from Egypt, the priests bearing the sacred utensils march at the head of the procession. Some have rendered "ye that are Jehovah's armour-bearers" (so Cheyne, formerly), a military figure suggested by the Hebrew phrase, but perhaps a little far-fetched in the context.

12. Unlike the former exodus, the departure is to take place deliberately and in perfect security, without haste (Ex. xiii. 11; Deut. xvi. 3), a representation differing somewhat from xlviii. 20.

the LORD will go before you] Ex. xiii. 21 f., &c.

will be your rereward] your rear guard; see Ex. xiv. 19.

13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,

CH. LII. 13—LIII. 12. THE SERVANT'S SACRIFICE
AND HIS REWARD.

This is the last and greatest, as well as the most difficult, of the four delineations of the Servant of Jehovah, and in several respects occupies a place apart. In the previous passages the Servant has been described as the ideal prophet or teacher, conscious of a world-wide mission in the service of God, which he prosecutes amid discouragement and persecution with inflexible purpose and the unfaltering assurance of ultimate success. There has been no hint that his activity was interrupted by death. Here the presentation is quite different. The conception of the Prophet is all but displaced by that of the Man of Sorrows, the meek and patient martyr, the sin-bearer. The passage is partly retrospective and partly prophetic. In so far as it is a retrospect there is no allusion to the prophetic activity of the servant; it is only after he has been raised from the dead that he is to assume the function of the great religious guide and authority of the world. But the most striking feature of the passage is the unparalleled sufferings of the Servant, and the effect they produce on the minds of his contemporaries. The tragedy of which they have been spectators makes an impression far more profound and convincing than any direct teaching could have done, compelling them to recognise the mission of the Servant, and at the same time producing penitence and confession of their own sin. The whole conception here given of the Servant of the Lord makes the prophecy the most remarkable anticipation in the Old Testament of the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

The passage may be divided into three parts:—

(1) An introduction, briefly stating the import of all that follows,—the coming exaltation of the Servant in contrast to his past abasement (lii. 13—15).

(2) A historical review of the Servant's career, as he had appeared to his contemporaries in the days of his humiliation (liii. 1—9).

(3) An announcement of the glorious future and the astonishing success in store for him as the reward of his obedience unto death (vv. 10—12).

The middle section may be further subdivided into three strophes, yielding an arrangement (recognised by most commentators) of the whole in five strophes of three verses each.

13—15. Jehovah utters a brief but pregnant announcement of the brilliant destiny in store for His Servant. Known to many in his misfortunes as an object of aversion and contempt, he shall suddenly be revealed in his true dignity; and the unexpected transformation will startle the whole world into astonishment and reverence. The verses form a prelude to ch. liii., being a summary of what is there described in detail; and they indicate what is the main idea of the whole passage, viz. the unexampled contrast between the present (and past) degradation and the future glory of Jehovah's Servant.

13. *my servant shall deal prudently*] A more appropriate rendering

He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
 As many were astonished at thee;
 His visage *was* so marred more than *any* man,
 And his form more than the sons of men:

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is that of R.V. marg. **my servant shall prosper**, i.e. his career shall be crowned with complete success. The primary idea of the verb used is no doubt "wisdom" (not mere shrewdness, however, rather "insight," see Gen. iii. 6; Isa. xlv. 18), but it also includes the success which is the normal result of wise action, and sometimes this secondary idea almost supplants the original meaning (Josh. i. 7 f.; 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14 f. etc.). This sense seems to be required here by the parallelism with the next line, for there is nothing in the whole prophecy to justify us in regarding the Servant's elevation as the *effect* of his wisdom. The verse is "a simple prediction of the exaltation awaiting the Servant, in contrast with his past sorrows and abasement" (Davidson).

he shall be exalted and extolled] or "high and lifted up." The same combination used of Jehovah in ch. lvii. 15; of His throne in vi. 1.

14, 15 must be read as a single compound sentence. The protasis is the first line of v. 14 ("According as many were astonished at thee"); the corresponding apodosis follows in v. 15 ("so shall he sprinkle &c."), the intervening clauses being a parenthesis suggested by the word "astonied."

as many were astonished at thee] The word "astonied" expresses the blank amazement, mingled with horror, excited in the minds of beholders by the spectacle of the Servant's unparalleled sufferings (cf. 1 Ki. ix. 8; Jer. ii. 12, xviii. 16). It is natural to suppose that the "many" here referred to are the same as the "many nations" who witness the Servant's subsequent exaltation (v. 15), but the point is not to be pressed, and on the hypothesis that the Servant is an individual Israelite, the spectators of the Servant's abasement could hardly be the nations of the world. Instead of "thee" the Targ. and Pesh. seem to have read "him," thus avoiding an embarrassing change of person. The LXX., on the other hand, preserve the 2nd pers. throughout v. 14. The change of person may no doubt be explained as caused by the parenthesis, but it is awkward nevertheless, and almost misleading, and many commentators prefer to alter the text in accordance with the Targ.

his visage was so marred, &c.] Render:

—so marred from that of man was his aspect,
 and his form from that of the sons of men—

The sentence is inserted parenthetically to explain the repugnance felt by all who beheld the Servant in his former abject condition. The meaning is that he was so disfigured by disease (see ch. liii. 3) as to be no longer human in appearance. The word for "marred" is pointed as a noun (not found elsewhere): "a marred object." A participle (*moshhāth*) would read more naturally after the adverb "so," although the punctuators must have had some reason for avoiding the more obvious form.

- 15 So shall he sprinkle many nations;
 The kings shall shut their mouths at him:
 For *that* which had not been told them shall they
 see;
 And *that* which they had not heard shall they
 consider.

15. *so shall he sprinkle many nations*] The verb rendered "sprinkle" means elsewhere to "scatter (a liquid) in small drops," and its usage is confined to the ceremonial act illustrated by Lev. iv. 6; Num. xix. 18f. etc. This is the sense intended by the A.V. and the ancient authorities (Aquila, Theodotion, Vulg.) which it follows; the antithesis suggested being that as the Servant had been shunned by many as unclean, so he shall (metaphorically) "sprinkle" them, i.e. make them clean. But this interpretation imports into the passage ideas which are not expressed, and is besides inadmissible on grammatical grounds; i.e. the verb always means to *sprinkle* (a liquid), not to *besprinkle* (a person or thing). The only rendering at all compatible with the ceremonial use of the word would be that of the Targ.: "so shall he scatter many nations," where the nations are actually, by a most unnatural metaphor, compared to spiring drops of water. To reach a satisfactory sense it is only necessary to assume that the Hebrew verb had a wider range of meaning than is represented in the O.T. It might be causative of a verb (found in Arabic) meaning to "spring" or "leap," just as the English "sprinkle" is perhaps etymologically the causative of "spring." We may thus render with R.V. marg. **so will he startle many nations**, i.e. "cause them to spring" in surprise, or (better) "cause them to rise up suddenly" in reverential admiration. Cf. ch. xlix. 7 and Job xxix. 8 ("The aged arose and stood up"). Most modern writers agree in this explanation, although some have recourse to emendation of the text. The LXX. expresses the same general idea (θαυμάσονται ἔθνη πολλά, "many nations shall marvel").

kings shall shut their mouths because of him (R.V. marg.)] Comp. again Job's touching description of the respect paid to him in the days of his prosperity: "The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth" (xxix. 9f., cf. Mic. vii. 16). The art. before "kings" should be omitted (as in R.V.).

for that which had not been told them &c.] The meaning is either that the exaltation of the Servant is an event of which they had received no announcement beforehand, or that it is one the like of which had never been known. If the reference be to the coming elevation of Israel, either sense would be suitable; if on the other hand the resurrection of an individual be predicted, the second would be more appropriate.

ch. liii. 1—9. Having thus indicated the subject of his discourse, the prophet now proceeds to describe the career of the Servant, and the impression he had made on his contemporaries. This is prefaced in

Who hath believed our report?

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And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

vv. 1 by a confession or complaint of the universal unbelief which had led to his being so grievously misunderstood.

The speakers in this section can hardly be the heathen mentioned in *lii. 15*, but either all Israel or one Israelite in the name of all. The "nations" and "kings" are surprised by the Servant's exaltation because they had not previously heard of it; those who now speak confess a deeper fault, they have heard but did not believe. It is generally assumed that there is a change of speaker in *vv. 7—9*, where the use of the 1st pers. plu. is discontinued, and where (*v. 8*) we come across the expression "*my people*." This assumption is to be avoided if possible, because *vv. 7 ff.* continue the narrative of the Servant's sufferings, and it is unnatural to think that the story begun by one speaker should be completed by another unless there were some clear indication that this is the case. There appears to be no difficulty in the supposition that the prophet himself speaks throughout; although in *vv. 2—6* he associates himself with his generation, the contemporaries of the Servant. There must be some reason for his thus merging his individual consciousness in that of the community; and the obvious reason is that in depicting the Servant as he appeared to men, he writes as a spectator along with others, and realises his solidarity with his nation. In *vv. 7—9* the description simply becomes less subjective; the emphasis lies less on what men thought of the Servant, and more on what he was and endured; and when the prophet again has occasion to refer to Israel it is natural that he should do so as "*my people*."—Another thing to be noted is that the language is consistently retrospective. Historic tenses are employed throughout, the speaker looks back on the completed tragedy of the Servant's career, and on the people's former thoughts of him as things that belong to the past. On the other hand, the exaltation of the Servant is always spoken of (both in *lii. 13—15*, and in *liii. 10—12*) as something still future. The standpoint assumed here seems therefore to be intermediate between the death of the Servant and his exaltation; and the great moral change which is described as taking place in the mind of the people is not the result of the revelation of his glory, but is brought about by reflection on his unparalleled sufferings, and his patient demeanour under them, preparing the people to believe the prophecies which had hitherto seemed incredible.

1. The verse should probably be rendered,

Who believed that which was revealed to us,

And the arm of Jehovah—to (lit. "on") whom was it disclosed?

The word which E.V. renders "report" is passive in form (lit. "a thing heard"); *our report*, therefore, is not "that which we reported" but either "the report concerning us" (2 Sam. iv. 4) or "that which was reported to us." The last sense is alone admissible in this connexion, and the only question that remains is, What kind of report is referred to? Usually the word denotes a rumour circulated by the ordinary channels of intelligence (ch. xxxvii. 7 &c.), and this meaning might be

- For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant,

thought of here if we could suppose the words spoken *after* the elevation of the Servant. But this is objectionable, (a) because the standpoint of the speakers is not subsequent to the glorification of the Servant, but prior to it (see above), (b) the speakers, being Israelites, cannot readily be supposed to learn the Servant's exaltation from rumour, and (c) it would be necessary to render the verb "*Who could have believed?*" which although possible is not natural. The question implies a negative answer: "No one believed it." It is better therefore to take the word in its religious sense of a Divine revelation (see on ch. xxviii. 9), a "thing heard" from Jehovah. "Our revelation" might of course be said by the prophet of a communication made directly to himself; but it might also be said by the people of a revelation which had reached them through the medium of the prophets. The reference will be to the prophecies bearing on the Servant's glorious destiny, especially ch. xlii. 1—4, xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, and perhaps lii. 13—15.

The *arm of the LORD* is, as in ch. li. 9, lii. 10 &c., a metaphor for Jehovah's operation in history. It was He who raised up the Servant, and all through his tragic history God was working by him for the redemption of His people and the inbringing of eternal salvation. But this Divine power behind the Servant had not been "disclosed" to any of his contemporaries; they had neither perceived it for themselves nor believed it when declared to them, and so in the blindness and deafness of their unbelief they had misconceived him in the manner exhibited in *vv.* 2 ff.

The verse is cited, with reference to the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, in John xii. 38 and (in part) Rom. x. 16.

2. The verse seems to take us back to the origin of the Servant's career, in order to account for the powerful prejudices with which his contemporaries regarded him. From the first he had been mean and unprepossessing in appearance, like a stunted shrub struggling for existence in an arid soil. To this corresponded the first impressions of the people, which were mainly of a negative kind; they found in him nothing that was attractive or desirable. Beyond this the verse does not go.

For he shall grow up] Lit. **And he grew up.** It is not easy to make out such a connexion between this sentence and the last as would naturally be expressed by "and." If what is here stated were the explanation of the unbelief confessed in *v.* 1, the proper conjunction would be "for," and so the word is by many rendered. Others take it as the "and" of consequence (=and so), but the clause is not a statement of what the people thought of the Servant in consequence of their unbelief, but of what he actually was. The phrase "before him" seems decisive on that point, unless with Ewald and others we change the reading to "before us." With that alteration the whole verse speaks of the impressions men formed of the Servant, and these impressions might readily be regarded as the result of their want of spiritual insight. But if the received text be retained (and there is no sufficient reason for departing from it) the description begins with a

And as a root out of a dry ground :
 He hath no form nor comeliness ;
 And when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we
 should desire him.
 He is despised and rejected of men ;
 A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief :
 And we hid as it were *our* faces from him ;

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statement of fact and then proceeds to the effect on the mind of the people. It is probable that no logical connexion with the preceding is intended. The conjunction may mark the commencement of the narrative, in accordance with a tendency to begin a speech with "and" (Josh. xxii. 28; Jer. ix. 21; cf. ch. ii. 2).

as a tender plant] a sapling. Cf. Ez. xvii. 22; Job xiv. 7.

a root (cf. ch. xi. 10) out of a dry ground] The "dry ground" might, on some theories of what is meant by the Servant, symbolise the Exile with its political hardships and lack of religious advantages, but it is doubtful if the figure should be pressed so far. The Servant is compared to a plant springing up in such a soil, but whether the prophet thought of his lowly growth as due in any degree to unfavourable circumstances is uncertain.

In what follows *hath* should be *had*, and *comeliness*, *majesty*. The words for *form* and *beauty* are the same as those rendered "form" and "aspect" in lii. 14. Both are here used in the sense of "pleasing form" &c.; comp. "a man of form" in 1 Sam. xvi. 18, and the Latin *formosus* from *forma*, or "shapely" from "shape."

and when we shall see him] Rather, *when we saw him*. The clause, however, might (disregarding the accents) be read with what precedes: "...and no majesty, that we should look upon him—and no aspect that we should desire him" (see R.V. marg.). This at least yields a more perfect parallelism in the last two lines.

3. Not only did the Servant fail to attract his contemporaries (v. 2); there was that in his appearance which excited positive aversion. He is represented as one stricken with loathsome and disfiguring disease, probably leprosy (see on v. 4), so that men instinctively recoiled from him in horror and disgust.

He is despised and rejected of men] Better, *Despised and man-forsaken*, i.e. one with whom men refuse to associate, or, perhaps, one who renounces the hope of human fellowship. The corresponding verb is used by Job when he complains of the estrangement of his friends: "my kinsfolk have failed" (ch. xix. 14).

For *sorrows...grief*, read *pains...sickness*. Although both words may be used tropically of mental suffering, it is plain that *in the figure* of this verse and the following they are to be taken in their literal sense.

and we hid &c.] More literally, *and as one from whom there is a hiding of the face*; his appearance was such as to cause men involuntarily to cover their face from the sight of him. The expression

- He was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs,
 And carried our sorrows:
 Yet we did esteem him stricken,
 Smitten of God, and afflicted.

is similar to another phrase of Job's: "I am a spitting in the face" (xvii. 6). For the idea cf. Job xix. 19, xxx. 10. Leprosy is again suggested. The rendering of LXX. and Vulg. "and as one who hid his face from us" is grammatically defensible, but conveys a wrong idea; the Servant "hid not his face from shame and spitting" (ch. l. 6). *esteemed him not*] (lit. "reckoned him not"), **held him of no account.**

4—6. While vv. 2, 3 describe the natural instinctive impressions produced by the Servant's appearance, vv. 4—6 reveal incidentally the moral judgement which the people were led to form regarding him. His unparalleled sufferings had seemed to them to mark him out as a special object of Jehovah's anger (v. 4), just as Job's calamities were believed by his friends to be the evidence of great, though secret, sins. But it is the reversal of this judgement, and the perception thereby gained of the true nature of the Servant's mission, that is the chief theme of this section. The people now see that although he suffered greatly he was himself innocent, and from this they have advanced to the conclusion that he suffered vicariously, bearing the penalty due to the sin of his nation. This change of attitude towards the Servant marks the beginning of repentance in the people; the consciousness of their own guilt takes possession of their minds when they read God's judgement upon it in the chastisement borne by their substitute.

4. *Surely he hath borne &c.*] Render:

**Surely it was our sicknesses that he bore
 and our pains that he carried.**

The emphasis of contrast lies on the words *our* and *he* in both lines. To "bear" sickness is not to take it away (although that will be the effect of vicarious bearing of it) but simply to endure it (as Jer. x. 19). In Matt. viii. 17 the words are applied to our Lord's miracles of healing, but the prophet's meaning plainly is that the Servant endured in his own person the penal consequences of the people's guilt.

yet we did esteem &c.] Rather, **while we accounted him stricken &c.** The subject "we" is strongly emphasised, and the clause is circumstantial, introducing the people's false estimate of the Servant as a concomitant of the main statement of the verse. "Stricken" is the expression used when God visits a man with severe and sudden sickness (Gen. xii. 17; 1 Sam. vi. 9), especially leprosy, which was regarded as preeminently the "stroke" of God's hand (Job xix. 21; 2 Ki. xv. 5; Lev. xiii. 3, 9, 20) and the direct consequence of sin. That the Servant is pictured as a leper is suggested by several particulars in the description, such as his marred and disfigured form, and his isolation from human society, as well as the universal conviction of his contemporaries **that he**

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, 5
He was bruised for our iniquities:
 The chastisement of our peace *was* upon him;
 And with his stripes we are healed.
 All we like sheep have gone astray; 6
 We have turned every one to his own way;
 And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

was a special object of the divine wrath; and the impression is confirmed by the parallel case of Job, the typical righteous sufferer, whose disease was elephantiasis, the most hideous form of leprosy. It has to be borne in mind, of course, that the figure of the Servant is in some sense an ideal creation of the prophet's mind, so that the leprosy is only a strong image for such sufferings as are the evidence of God's wrath against sin.

5. In v. 4 the people confess that the Servant was their substitute in his endurance of pains and sicknesses; here they penetrate more deeply into the meaning of his sufferings, perceiving the connexion between his passion and their own sin. The connexion is twofold; in the first place the Servant's suffering was the penalty due to the people's transgressions, and in the second place it was the remedy by which they were restored to spiritual health.

**But he was pierced because of our rebellions,
 Crushed because of our iniquities.**

The strong verbs "pierced" (see ch. li. 9) and "crushed" (Job vi. 9) are probably metaphors expressing the fatal ravages of leprosy.

the chastisement of our peace] i.e. the chastisement needful to procure peace or well-being for us. "Chastisement" is pain inflicted for moral ends and with remedial intent (Prov. iii. 11 f. &c.). Cheyne's assertion that the notion of punishment is the primary one in this word is not borne out by O.T. usage.

with his stripes] lit. **weals** (see ch. i. 6).

That the people themselves had suffered for their sins is not excluded, but is apparently implied in the last words ("we are healed"), and is expressly said in other parts of the book (ch. xl. 2, xlii. 24 f. &c.). What the verse teaches is that the people could not be healed by their own suffering; it was only through the Servant's voluntary submission to the divine chastisement (v. 7), and his bearing it in an extraordinary degree, that an atonement was effected between Jehovah and Israel (see on ch. xl. 2).

6. Looking back on their former irreligious condition the people see that their rejection of the Servant was the natural outcome of the heedless and inconsiderate selfishness in which they were living. For the figure of the strayed sheep, cf. Ps. cxix. 176; Matt. ix. 36, x. 6; Luke xv. 4.

For *have gone...have turned*, read **had gone...had turned**.

every one to his own way] selfishly following his individual impulses and interests; cf. lvi. 11.

hath laid on him the iniquity] **made to light on him the guilt**.

- 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
 Yet he opened not his mouth:
 He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
 And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
 So he openeth not his mouth.
- 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment:

7—9. The narrative of the Servant's sufferings is in these verses brought to its conclusion: after enduring violence and injustice at the hands of men, his life was cut short and he was laid in a dishonoured grave. The passage presents many difficulties, and the details of the picture are somewhat uncertain. Thus it is doubtful whether the Servant be represented as put to death by men, or as carried off by the disease with which Jehovah had smitten him. With perhaps less reason it has been questioned whether there is any reference to human cruelty in the verses at all, whether the strong expressions "oppressed," "oppression," "judgement" are not to be understood figuratively of the hard fate which relentlessly pursued the sufferer to his death (so Duhm). These matters, however, are of subordinate interest; the prominent feature of the description is the meek and submissive demeanour of the Servant under his undeserved sufferings.

7. *He was oppressed and he was afflicted*] The first verb ("oppressed") may summarize the preceding account of the Servant's afflictions (Dillmann), but more probably it introduces a feature not previously adverted to, namely, the outrages inflicted on the Servant by his contemporaries, in consequence of their false judgement of him. It denotes harsh, cruel and arbitrary treatment, such as that of a slave-driver towards those who are under him (Ex. iii. 7; Job iii. 18), and is nowhere employed of God's action towards men. The second verb is shewn by the form of sentence to be a contrast to the first, and must therefore be rendered as in R.V.: *yet he humbled himself* (cf. Ex. x. 3, "How long dost thou refuse to humble thyself...?"). And as this is the main idea of the verse, the meaning may best be brought out if we translate the first two lines thus:

**Though oppressed, he was submissive
 and opened not his mouth.**

Cf. Ps. xxxviii. 13, 14, xxxix. 9.

he is brought...dumb] Two relative sentences, to be rendered with R.V.

**as a lamb (lit. "sheep") that is led to the slaughter,
 and a sheep (lit. "ewe") that before her shearers is dumb.**

Comp. Jer. xi. 19: "I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter."

so (R.V. "yea") *he openeth not his mouth*] in the Hebr. an exact repetition of the second line. Since the tetrastich is complete without it, the clause may possibly have been inserted through an error in transcription.

8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment*] Every word here

And who shall declare his generation?

is ambiguous. The principal interpretations are as follows: (1) "Without hindrance and without right he was taken away," i.e. he was put to death without opposition from any quarter, and in defiance of justice. The only exception that can fairly be taken to this view is the translation "hindrance," a sense of the noun for which there are no parallels. Yet the verb from which the noun is derived occurs in the sense of "detain" (1 Ki. xviii. 44, &c.), and as the noun is very uncommon, the rendering cannot be pronounced impossible. (2) "Through oppression and through judgement he was taken away" (so virtually R.V.). "Judgement" here means "judicial procedure," and the rendering "oppression" is guaranteed by Ps. cvii. 39. "Oppression and judgement" may mean (as explained by Cheyne) an oppressive judgement ("through distressful doom," see his *Introduction*, p. 428), the idea being that the Servant's death, like that of our Lord, was a judicial murder. For "taken away" in the sense of "put to death" see on ch. lii. 5, and cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 4 (where, however, a different part of the verb is used). (3) "From oppression and from judgement he was taken away," i.e. released by death, or taken by God to Himself (2 Ki. ii. 10). Here the sense of "oppression and judgement" is indeterminate; the meaning might either be simply that by death he was finally released from his troubles, or that God took him away from the malice of his persecutors. The rendering "imprisonment" instead of "oppression" could be justified from the usage of the verb (2 Ki. xvii. 4 &c.), although not of the noun itself; only in this case we must not read, "From imprisonment...he was led away (to execution)," for that is an idea which could hardly have suggested itself apart from the fulfilment of the prophecy in the crucifixion of Christ. Of the three interpretations the last seems the most natural, although everything turns on the question whether the death of the Servant is conceived as caused directly by men or by God through sickness. (See below on the last clause of this verse.)

And who shall declare his generation? A still more difficult clause. The Hebr. word for "generation" (*dôr*) may mean (a) the time in which he lived, (b) the circle of his contemporaries, (c) those like-minded with him (Ps. xii. 7, xiv. 5; Prov. xxx. 11 ff.); but is never used with any such significance as "length of life," or "life-history," or "posterity." In neither of its three senses does it supply a suitable object to the verb *declare* or rather *consider* (Ps. cxliii. 5 "meditate"). We may, however, take it in the sense (b), and render with R.V. **and as for his generation who (among them) considered &c.** (On this construction see Davidson, *Synt.* § 72, Rem. 4). Yet the construction as direct obj. of the verb is so much the more natural that any suggestion would be acceptable which might enable us to retain it. Duhm (following Knobel) takes the word in its Aramaic sense of "dwelling-place" (see on ch. xxxviii. 12) and translates "who enquires after his dwelling-place" (with God)? It would be better, perhaps, to understand "dwelling-place" exactly as in xxxviii. 12, of the earthly dwelling-place, the place that once knew him but knows him no more: "Who enquires

For he was cut off out of the land of the living:

For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

- 9 And he made his grave with the wicked,
And with the rich in his death;

after it, or thinks about it?" he has vanished from the thoughts of men.

for he was cut off (Ps. lxxxviii. 5; Ezek. xxxvii. 11) *out of the land of the living*] Comp. again Jer. xi. 19. The R.V. makes this clause an object sentence governed by the verb "considered" (reading *that* instead of *for*). This is perhaps necessary if the R.V. rendering of the previous line be adopted.

for the rebellion of my people was he stricken (lit. "(was) a stroke upon him")] The last word in the Hebr. (מִלְחָמָה) would be translated most naturally "upon them" (but see Davidson, *Gram.* § 19 R. c.); hence some render "because of the rebellion of my people, *the stroke (due) to them.*" A far more satisfactory sense is obtained by the help of the LXX. Read לָמוֹת and change the preceding noun into a passive verb (*nugga'* for *nega'*) and render **was he stricken unto death**. The expression "stricken" is from the same verb which in v. 4 suggested leprosy as the cause of the Servant's disfigurement; and its use here in connexion with his death is in favour of the view that he died of his sickness and not by the hands of his persecutors. If this conclusion be sound it confirms the view expressed above as to the sense of the first clause of this verse.

9. The unrelenting antipathy which the Servant experienced through life is continued even after his death, and expresses itself in the manner of his burial.

And they (R.V.) *made his grave with the wicked*] The subject is indefinite, the construction being equivalent to a passive: "And his grave was made" &c. "With the wicked" need not imply that a special burial-ground was set apart for them as a class, but only that such persons were buried ignominiously and away from the family sepulchre, like Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 17). From Jer. xxvi. 23 (cf. 2 Ki. xxiii. 6) it appears that it was a disgrace to be buried among the "common people." In this case the "wicked" probably means the notoriously wicked, criminals, apostates, and such like. With these the Servant was numbered because his calamities had seemed to mark him out as a heinous sinner in the sight of God.

and with the rich in his death] This clause must express the same idea as the preceding. To take the two antithetically: "they meant his grave to be with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death" (Delitzsch) is utterly unwarrantable. It is, no doubt, somewhat difficult to justify this sense of "rich" as synonymous with "wicked" from O.T. usage, although it might perhaps be suggested by the common identification of poverty with piety. This explanation, however, is not

Because he had done no violence,
Neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put ¹⁰
him to grief:

quite satisfactory, and several emendations have been proposed, such as
"the oppressor" (עֹשֶׂה for עָשָׂה), "the defrauder" (עֲשִׂי, Aramaic),
"evil-doers" (עֲשִׂי רָע).

in his death] lit. "in his deaths." The use of the plural is variously explained. Some find in it an intimation of the collective character of the subject spoken of under the name of the Servant; but even if the Servant be a collective idea, it is inconceivable that the writer should have here abandoned the personification which he has so strictly maintained throughout. Nor is it any relief to say that it means "in his state of death." It is better to read the singular with the LXX. There is, however, another reading found in a few MSS. and adopted by many commentators, according to which the clause would form a perfect parallelism with the first line:

"And with the rich (or oppressor, &c.) *his sepulchral mound.*"
But the word *bāmāh* (=high-place) is not elsewhere used in this sense.
because he had done no violence &c.] Render with R.V. **although**
("in spite of the fact that") &c. as in Job xvi. 17. With this assertion of his innocence the narrative of the Servant's career reaches its conclusion. While absolute sinlessness is not explicitly predicated of him, but only freedom from "violence" and "deceit," yet the image of the lamb led to the slaughter, and his patient resignation to the will of God, strongly suggest that the prophet had in his mind the conception of a perfectly sinless character.

10—12. These difficult verses describe, partly in the prophet's own words and partly in those of Jehovah, the Divine purpose which is realised through the sufferings of the Servant. In vv. 10, 11 it is impossible to trace a clear connexion of ideas; the grammar also is peculiar, and in all probability there is considerable textual disorder. The main thought, however, is that the Servant is to be the instrument in establishing the true religion, by removing the burden of guilt and bringing many to righteousness. As the reward of his sufferings he will enjoy a brilliant future and have a numerous spiritual offspring. He will become a great power in the world, attaining a position like that of a mighty conqueror. The idea of a resurrection from the dead appears to be necessarily implied. If the Servant be a personification of Israel, this is merely a figure for national restoration from exile; but if he be an individual, then his resurrection must be accepted as a literal fact, just as his death must be literally understood.

10. *Yet it pleased...grief*] The sentence must be a restatement of the fact that the Servant has suffered by the will of Jehovah, this being repeated in order to introduce the explanation of Jehovah's purpose in imposing chastisement upon him. The second clause, *he hath put him to grief*, represents a single Hebrew word, which is

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,
 He shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days,
 And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his
 hand.

- 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be
 satisfied :

vocalised and translated by the LXX. as the noun for "sickness" (v. 3). The meaning intended by the punctuators is probably "he hath made him sick" (R.V. marg.), although the form is anomalous and the syntax uncertain. Since it is too short to form an independent line, it must be closely attached to what precedes: hence the rendering of Dillmann and others, "It pleased Jehovah to crush him incurably," i.e. grievously (cf. Mic. vi. 13; Nah. iii. 19). This is perhaps the best that can be made of the received reading, but it is most probable that the textual derangement which prevails in these verses begins here.

when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin] Rather "if (or when) his soul should present a guilt-offering." The difficulty here does not lie in the analogy of the guilt-offering, for this probably signifies nothing more than has been already expressed in plain words, that the Servant's death is the means of removing guilt (vv. 4, 5, 6). It does not appear that the distinctive ritual and function of the guilt-offering (*āshām*, see Lev. v. 14 ff., &c.) throws any light on this passage. The chief difficulty is the hypothetical character of the sentence, of which no satisfactory explanation has been given. No doubt the atoning effect of the sufferings is the condition of Jehovah's great purpose being attained, but the condition has been already fulfilled, whereas it is here spoken of as an event which is, if not problematic, at least future.—The subject is ambiguous, but on every ground it is better to suppose that "his soul" is subject than that Jehovah is addressed. Ewald and Cheyne, however, prefer to read (with the change of a consonant) "when he shall make his soul a guilt-offering."

he shall see a seed (cf. Gen. 1. 23) *he shall prolong his days*] i.e. shall enjoy long life. His "seed" are the true spiritual Israel of the future, those who by his means are converted to the knowledge of Jehovah.

the pleasure (i.e. **the purpose**, see on xlv. 28) *of the LORD*] the establishment of the universal religion, the eternal salvation. The verse returns on itself by repetition of the opening idea (as vv. 3, 6, 7)—"palindromically," as Delitzsch would say.

11. An amplification of the meaning of v. 10. *He shall see &c.*] Lit. **Of the travail of his soul he shall see, shall be satisfied.** It is doubtful if the preposition "of" can express *result*, as the E. V. suggests, or can introduce the object of the verb "he shall see." It may be used in its local sense ("away from," or "free from") or causally ("in consequence of"), hardly in a temporal sense ("after"). The asyndetic construction of the two verbs probably indicates that one is to be subordinated to the other: **he shall see with satisfaction**, sc. the cause of Jehovah prospering in his hand (as v. 10). The LXX. deserves

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;

For he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, 12

And he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

Because he hath poured out his soul unto death:

And he was numbered with the transgressors;

attention: "And it pleased the Lord to deliver (a variant reading of the last clause of v. 10) (him) from the trouble of his soul: to cause him to see light" &c.

by his knowledge] The gen. is not that of the obj. ("by the knowledge of him") but of the subj.; the knowledge of God and salvation which he possesses, and which he communicates to others. The reference is to the prophetic activity of the Servant (see xlii. 1 ff., xlix. 2, l. 4 f.) which had seemed to be cut short by his death, but will be resumed and crowned with success in his exalted state.

shall my righteous servant justify many] Rather: **shall a righteous one, my servant, make the many righteous**; but the Hebr. is very peculiar. The ordinary sense of the word for "justify" ("declare righteous") is here unsuitable, and the only other passage where it bears the ethical sense of "making righteous" is probably based on this verse (Dan. xii. 3, "they that turn the many to righteousness"). The *many* contains a reference to lii. 14 f. The clause would read more smoothly if we could suppose that the word rendered "a righteous one" has arisen through dittography; but the source of the difficulty probably lies deeper.

he shall bear their iniquities] Cf. v. 4.

12. As the reward of his unmerited sufferings and his mediatorial work, the Servant shall attain an influence equal to that of the great potentates of the world. To "divide spoil" is a figurative and proverbial expression for victory or success; Prov. xvi. 19 ("It is better to be of lowly spirit with the meek than to divide spoil with the proud"). It is therefore not necessarily implied that the Servant's future greatness will be political, although that is certainly suggested.

Instead of *will I divide*, the LXX. reads "he shall inherit" (which is perhaps preferable as avoiding the recurrence of the same verb in two consecutive lines), but it is a mistake of some authorities to follow this version in treating the "many" as direct obj. of the verb; the sense must be either "he shall inherit," or "I will give him a share" amongst the many.

The latter part of the verse returns to the great contrast that runs through the passage, between the true meaning of the Servant's afflictions and the false construction put on them.

because he poured out (omit "hath" with R.V.) *his soul*] his blood, which is the seat of life; Lev. xvii. 11. For the expression cf. Ps. cxli. 8.

was numbered with the rebels] See v. 9. Cited Mark xv. 28; Luke xxii. 37.

And he bare the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

and he bare &c.] whereas he bare, the true view of his death as opposed to the false judgement of men,—a circumstantial clause.
for the transgressors] for the rebellious, the class to which he was himself reckoned.

Although several things in this marvellous description of the innocent suffering for the guilty be obscure, the salient features of the picture stand out with great clearness. Whether the portrait be that of an individual or of a personified community is a question that need not here be discussed (see Appendix, Note I.). If there be personification it is as consistently maintained as it is vividly conceived, and we are hardly entitled to assume that the writer has anywhere allowed the collective reality to peer through the veil of allegory. The figure brought on the scene is that of a man, so marred and deformed by revolting sickness as to be universally shunned and despised and maltreated as one bearing the manifest tokens of the divine displeasure; yet the dignity and patience of his demeanour profoundly impresses his contemporaries, so that after his death their thoughts are irresistibly drawn back to the tragedy of his fate, and they come to the conviction that he was indeed what he professed to be, the Servant of Jehovah, that he was the one innocent person in his generation, and that his sufferings were due not to his personal guilt, but to the guilt of a whole nation, which is by them atoned for and taken away. And finally it is prophesied concerning him that he shall rise again, to the astonishment of the whole world, and that his career shall be crowned with success even more conspicuous than his humiliation had been.—It has already been pointed out that this conception of the Servant has certain affinities with the figure of Job, and it may be partly moulded on the story of that patriarch's trial. But the religious teaching of this passage moves on a different plane from that of the Book of Job. The problem of individual retribution, of how it can be that the righteous suffer, does not seem to have been present to the mind of the writer, although he no doubt furnishes an important contribution to the solution of that mystery. This is found in the idea of vicarious suffering, which is so emphatically expressed throughout the passage. Now the principle that the individual bears the guilt of the community to which he belongs was perfectly familiar to the ancient world, and many startling applications of it occur in the O.T. (Josh. vii. 24; 2 Sam. xxi. 6 &c.). It is true that it had begun to excite protest towards the time of the Exile (Deut. xxiv. 16; 2 Ki. xiv. 6; Jer. xxxi. 29; Ez. xviii. 20); but this prophet accepts the principle and discerns in it a moral significance by which it is deprived of the appearance of arbitrariness or injustice. The essence of the Servant's sacrifice lies in the fact that whilst himself innocent he acquiesces in the divine judgement on sin, and willingly endures it for the sake of his people. And it is the perception of this truth on the part of the people that brings home to them the sense of their own guilt, and removes the obstacle which their impenitence had interposed to Jehovah's

Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear;
Break forth *into* singing, and cry aloud, thou
that didst not travail with child:

purpose of salvation. The suffering of the innocent on behalf of the guilty is thus seen to be a moral necessity, since it was only through such sufferings as the sinless Servant of the Lord was alone capable of, that punishment could reach its end in the taking away of sin and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness.

CH. LIV. THE FUTURE FELICITY OF ZION, REUNITED TO JEHOVAH IN AN EVERLASTING COVENANT.

The chapter continues the series of oracles of consolation which commences at xlix. 14, and is broken by the two passages on the Servant of the Lord in l. 4—11 and lii. 13—liii. 12. The direct influence of the latter passage on ch. liv. is less obvious than might have been expected from the singularly profound conceptions there unfolded of the work of Jehovah's Servant. The points of contact adduced by some commentators are few and unessential, and they fall into insignificance by the side of the fact that "it cannot be shown that any of the characteristic ideas of ch. liii. are clearly referred to in ch. liv." (Cheyne.) Yet the supposition that this chapter was originally the sequel to lii. 12 and that the intervening prophecy was inserted by an afterthought is neither necessary nor altogether natural. The summons to depart from Babylon (lii. 11, 12) marks a pause in the development of the prophet's thought, and (just as after the similar apostrophe in xlviii. 20—22) a fresh point of departure is found in the idea of the Servant of the Lord. Moreover, although it may not be possible to trace the direct dependence of ch. liv. on ch. liii., we may nevertheless suppose a real connexion between the two in the prophet's mind. The two chapters deal with the same subject from two distinct standpoints. Whatever view be held as to the Servant's personality, there is no doubt that his exaltation implies the restoration of Israel, and that his work is the indispensable condition of that restoration being accomplished. Thus while ch. liii. describes the inward process of conversion by which the nation is made righteous, ch. liv. describes the outward deliverance which is the result; and the impression is probably correct that the glowing hopes here uttered are sustained in the last resort by the contemplation of the Servant's mission as described in ch. liii.

The chapter consists of two sections :—

i. vv. 1—10. (1) Zion, addressed as a barren and desolate woman, is comforted with the assurance that her children are more numerous than those she formerly had as the "married wife" of Jehovah. She is bidden to extend her tent so as to receive them, for they shall spread abroad on every side, peopling the deserted cities and taking possession of the territory of the Gentiles (vv. 1—3). (2) The shame of her youth and the reproach of widowhood are wiped out by her reconciliation to Jehovah, her Husband and her Maker (vv. 4—6). (3) It will be seen

For more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

- 2 Enlarge the place of thy tent,
And let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations :
Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes ;
- 3 For thou shalt break forth *on* the right hand and *on* the left ;
And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles,
And make the desolate cities to be inhabited.
- 4 Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed :

that her rejection was but a brief withdrawal of Jehovah's favour for her; her restoration now is final, resting on a covenant as unchangeable as the oath to Noah, or the everlasting mountains (vv. 7—10).

ii. vv. 11—17. Jerusalem shall be rebuilt in lavish magnificence (vv. 11, 12); her citizens, being all disciples of Jehovah, shall enjoy perfect peace, undisturbed by the thought of oppression (13, 14); her enemies shall be confounded, and no weapon forged against her shall prosper (15—17).

1—3. The ideal Zion is called upon to rejoice in the multitude of her children. As in ch. xlix. 21, the children are conceived as already born, and waiting to be acknowledged by their mother.

more are the children of the desolate (2 Sam. xiii. 20) &c.] The contrast is not between Zion and other cities, but between Zion's present and her past: even now in her widowhood and barrenness she has more children than she had before her separation from her Husband.

the married wife] Cf. ch. lxii. 4; Gen. xx. 3; Deut. xxii. 22. The image of the verse is applied by St Paul to the contrast between the spiritual and the earthly Jerusalem; i.e. the church of Christ and the Jewish community (Gal. iv. 27).

2. The idea of the verse is expressed in xlix. 20, 21; for the figure of the tent (in an opposite sense) cf. Jer. x. 20.

The *curtains* are the tent-hangings (Jer. xlix. 29; Hab. iii. 7), the *stakes*, the tent-pegs (ch. xxxiii. 20).

The words *spare not* should, according to the accents, be joined to the preceding clause.

3. The tent must be larger than of old, for the new community shall spread abroad (cf. Gen. xxviii. 14, xxx. 30, 43) *on the right hand and on the left*, i.e. in all directions.

inherit the Gentiles] take possession of nations (cf. Gen. xxii. 17, xxiv. 60). The reference is not to be limited to the heathen who had occupied the soil of Palestine; although the *desolate cities* in the parallel clause are no doubt primarily those of the holy land.

4—6. Zion shall forget her former shame in the joy of reconciliation to her God.

Neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame:

For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
And shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

For thy Maker *is* thine husband; 5
The LORD of hosts *is* his name;
And thy redeemer the Holy One of Israel;
The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and 6
grieved in spirit,
And a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

4. *the reproach of thy widowhood* clearly refers to the period of the Exile when Zion regarded herself as cast off by Jehovah. The sense of *the shame of thy youth* is less obvious. Since the conception has some affinities with the striking allegory in Ezek. xvi. it is probable that the reference goes back to the origin of the nation (cf. Ezek. xvi. 4—8); the reference being to the Egyptian oppression.

5. *thy Maker is thine husband*] Rather, **thy husband is thy Maker**: He who has entered into this closest and tenderest of relations is none other than He who made thee. "Husband" in the original is a partic.; lit. "he who marries thee"; and both nouns are in the plural after the analogy of words like *ādōnīm* (=lord, the so-called plural of majesty).

thy redeemer] See on xli. 14.

shall he be called] Perhaps, **is he called**, parallel to "is his name." The ground of comfort lies in the thought that He who acknowledges Zion as His wife is the God of the whole earth, the ruler of all the forces of the universe.

6. Although Zion is temporarily estranged from Jehovah, she is yet a "wife of youth" holding a permanent place in her husband's affections.

For the LORD hath called thee] i.e. "calls thee" now (Cheyne, "hath recalled thee"). The reference is not to the first espousals of the nation at the exodus, but to the renewal of conjugal intercourse in the restoration from exile.

as a wife (R.V.) *forsaken and grieved in spirit*] neglected by her husband, and left to her own bitter reflexions, but not cast off. Cf. Hos. iii. 3.

and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused] R.V. "even a wife of youth, when she is cast off." The clause is difficult. Probably it is an exclamation: **and a wife of youth—can she be rejected?** (so Cheyne, after Ewald); it is impossible that she should be finally disowned.

a wife of youth] one who has been wooed and won in youth; Prov. v. 18; Mal. ii. 14f.

- 7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee;
But with great mercies will I gather thee.
- 8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,
Saith the LORD thy redeemer.
- 9 For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me:
For *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth;
So have I sworn that *I* would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.
- 10 For the mountains shall depart,
And the hills be removed;
But my kindness shall not depart from thee,
Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed,
Saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.
- 11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted,

7, 8. Jehovah's anger was but a momentary interruption of His kindness to Israel; His mercy is everlasting. Comp. Ps. xxx. 5. *will I gather thee*] can hardly mean "draw thee to myself"; it denotes the gathering together of the scattered children of Zion.

8. *In a little wrath*] **In an outbreak of wrath** (Heb. *shēṣeph qēṣeph*). The word *shēṣeph* is probably another form (chosen for the sake of assonance) of *shēṣeph* which occurs in Prov. xxvii. 4.

9, 10. The permanence of the new covenant relation is illustrated first by the promise made to Noah, of which the rainbow is the perpetual token, and then by the steadfastness of the unchanging hills.

For this is as the waters of Noah unto me] Or, according to the reading of several MSS. and the ancient versions (though not the LXX.), **As the days of Noah is this** (i.e. the present juncture) **to me** (see R.V. marg.). The difference of reading is very slight, consisting merely in the conjunction of two words which the received text separates (כִּי כִי for כִּי כִי). The second alternative is better.

for as I have sworn &c.] **as I have sworn &c.** (omitting "for"). Comp. Gen. viii. 21 f., ix. 11—17. The absence of any mention of an oath in the narrative is immaterial.

10. Comp. Ps. xlv. 2 f.; Hab. iii. 6.

The first sentence may be rendered concessively: **Though the mountains should remove and the hills be shaken, yet &c.**

my covenant of peace] (R.V.) Ezek. xxxiv. 25, xxxvii. 26; Mal. ii. 5. **that hath compassion**] as xlix. 10.

11, 12. The outward splendour of the new Jerusalem described in highly figurative language; comp. Tob. xiii. 16, 17; Rev. xxi. 18—21.

Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours,
 And lay thy foundations with sapphires.
 And I will make thy windows of agates, 12
 And thy gates of carbuncles,
 And all thy borders of pleasant stones.
 And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD; 13
 And great *shall be* the peace of thy children.
 In righteousness shalt thou be established: 14
 Thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not
 fear:

I will lay thy stones with fair colours] lit. in antimony (R.V. marg.). Antimony (*pūkḥ*) was used by Oriental females as an eye-powder to blacken the edges of the eyelids and enhance the lustre of the eyes (2 Ki. ix. 30; Jer. iv. 30; comp. the name of Job's third daughter, Keren-hap-pukh, 'horn of eye-powder,' Job xlii. 14. See further Lane, *Manners and Customs*, &c. ed. 1890, pp. 29 ff.). In the figure the antimony would represent the costly mortar used to set off the brilliancy of the still more costly stones. The ἀνθρακᾶ of the LXX. seems to stand for נֶפֶךְ (instead of פֶּנֶךְ), a kind of precious stone; see Ex. xxviii. 18 &c. In 1 Chron. xxix. 2, where we read of "stones of *pūkḥ*" (R.V. "stones for inlaid work") prepared for the Temple, the idea must be different; but whether that passage has any connexion with the present image is doubtful.

and lay thy foundations] lit. and found thee; or, changing the vowels, and thy foundations. *sapphires*] Ex. xxiv. 10; Ez. i. 26.

12. *thy windows*] Rather as R.V. pinnacles. The word is derived from that for "sun," and appears to denote those parts of the building which glitter in the sun's rays. (Comp. the Arab. "minaret," used primarily of a lantern or a lighthouse.)

agates] (Ezek. xxvii. 16) "sparkling" stone, perhaps rubies (so R.V.).
carbuncles] (only here) "fiery" stones; although the LXX. renders "stones of crystal."

all thy borders] R.V. border, perhaps the outer wall (the περίτειχος, see on ch. xxvi. 1).

13, 14. The righteousness, peace and security of the inhabitants.

taught of the LORD] lit. disciples of Jehovah, initiated in the true knowledge of God, and obedient to His will. Cf. Jer. xxxi. 34; John vi. 45. The expression is probably suggested by what the Servant of Jehovah says of himself in ch. l. 4; the idea being that the citizens of the new Jerusalem shall be the spiritual seed of the servant.

14. *In righteousness shalt thou be established*] (lit. shalt thou establish thyself) cf. Prov. xxiv. 3. "Righteousness" may describe the character of the citizens, but more probably it means that the position of the commonwealth is unassailable because based on right—on conformity to the divine order (see v. 17).

thou shalt be far from oppression] lit. be thou far from oppression

- And from terror; for it shall not come near thee.
 15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but* not by me:
 Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.
 16 Behold, I have created the smith
 'That bloweth the coals in the fire,
 And that bringeth forth an instrument for his work;
 And I have created the waster to destroy.
 17 No weapon *that* is formed against thee shall prosper;
 And every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment
 thou shalt condemn.

(R.V. marg.), i.e. let it be far from thy thoughts. Here it is obvious from the context that "oppression" is not wrong perpetrated within the city, but external oppression which might be inflicted by its enemies.

thou shalt not fear] i.e. hast no cause to fear.

terror] or *destruction*.

15. The verse is somewhat difficult. The rendering "gather together" can hardly be defended, and moreover it does not suit the construction ("against," in the second line, is really "with"). The verb is perhaps best explained as a by-form of a root meaning to "stir up" (strife) or pick a quarrel (Prov. xv. 18). The sense would be: **If (any) should stir up strife (it is) not of me; whosoever stirs up strife with thee shall fall, &c.** (See R.V. and marg.)

fall because of thee] or perhaps "fall upon thee" to his own ruin (cf. ch. viii. 14 f.). R.V. marg. suggests "fall away to thee," i.e. go over to thy side, which is the sense given by some of the ancient versions. The phrase has this meaning in Jer. xxi. 9, xxxvii. 14 ("fall away to the Chaldeans"), but it is little appropriate in this verse.

16, 17. No weapon formed against Zion shall prosper, because both the makers of weapons and those who use them are alike created by Jehovah, and all their activity is under His control.

the smith that bloweth the fire of coals (R.V.)] Cf. ch. xliv. 12.

an instrument for his work] rather **for its work**, or perhaps "according to its work," adapted to the particular work for which it is intended,—a scythe for reaping, a sword for slaughter, and so on. The smith will turn out anything, amongst other things deadly weapons, but all by the permission of Jehovah who has made *him*.

the waster to destroy] Not "to destroy the weapon that the smith has made"; the "waster" is the one for whose use the weapon is made; he also is the creature of Jehovah.

17. Israel therefore has no cause to fear any material weapon, and even the Satanic weapon of false accusations, which assail her righteous standing before God, she shall be able to foil.

every tongue...thou shalt condemn] i.e. shew to be in the wrong (cf. ch. l. 8 f.).

This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

This is the heritage &c.] A concluding summary. "This," viz., all the blessings just enumerated, peace, righteousness, security, triumph over opposition.

of the servants of the LORD] The title "servants of Jehovah" (in the plural) has not hitherto been used in the prophecy (with the doubtful exception of ch. xliv. 26, where it denotes the prophets). It is possible that its occurrence here forms a link of connexion between this chapter and the last. The ideal represented by *the* Servant of Jehovah is now reproduced in each individual member of the new Israel; they are all of the spiritual seed which was promised to him, and the salvation they enjoy is the fruit of the travail of his soul (liii. 10, 11). It is noteworthy, at all events, that while from this point the Israelites are spoken of as servants of Jehovah, the ideal Servant is never again mentioned.

and their righteousness is of me] Rather, **and** (this is) **their righteousness from me**. The righteousness, or justification, bestowed on them by Jehovah (cf. Ps. xxiv. 5) is manifested in such blessedness as has just been spoken of.

CH. LV. A CALL TO INDIVIDUALS TO EMBRACE THE COMING SALVATION.

(i) *vv. 1—5*. A gracious invitation to the blessings of the new Covenant.

(1) Salvation freely offered to the thirsty. Addressing those who are engaged in the pursuit of earthly good, the prophet, in the name of Jehovah, promises them the complete satisfaction of their wants by accepting a share in the kingdom of God (*vv. 1, 2*).

(2) On the condition of obedience Jehovah will make an everlasting Covenant with them, incorporating them in the Messianic community, in which the promises made to the house of David shall be realised (*vv. 3—5*).

(ii) *vv. 6—13*. This kingdom is at hand.

(1) The summons (*vv. 1 ff.*) is urgent, for Jehovah is near; now is the day of grace when He may be sought and found, and when even the wicked may obtain pardon through repentance (*vv. 6, 7*).

(2) Jehovah is in truth near, although His thoughts and purposes are too exalted to be apprehended by the narrow and earth-bound vision of selfish men (*vv. 8, 9*).

(3) Already the word has gone forth which is to renew the world and bring in the eternal redemption; it shall no more return empty than the rain and the snow return to heaven without having fertilized the earth (*vv. 10, 11*).

(4) The prophet here reverts to an image frequent in the earlier discourses. The great deliverance is on the eve of being accomplished; the exiles shall go out (from Babylon) with joy, and the noble trees

- 55 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
 And he that hath no money;
 Come ye, buy, and eat;
 Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

which spring up along their desert journey shall remain as an everlasting memorial of Jehovah's power (*vv.* 12, 13).

1, 2. The invitation. The message of the Gospel—its freeness, its appeal to the individual, its answer to the cravings of the heart—is nowhere in the O.T. more clearly foreshadowed than in this truly evangelical passage (cf. John iv. 10 ff., vi. 35 ff., vii. 37 f.; Rev. xxi. 6, xxii. 17; also Prov. ix. 1 ff.; Eccclus. xv. 3). The promises are of course not to be materialised, as if water, bread, wine, milk were meant literally, or merely as symbols of comfortable earthly existence in Palestine. At the same time when we seek to recover the original historical sense of the words, there is a possibility of spiritualising overmuch. The images used do, indeed, typify the blessings of salvation; but salvation itself in the O.T. is never without a national and therefore earthly element. Those here addressed are exiles (see *v.* 12), many of whom had doubtless carried out only too thoroughly the injunction of Jeremiah to "build houses and dwell in them; to plant gardens and eat the fruit of them; to take wives &c." in Babylon (Jer. xxix. 6). They were in danger of losing their nationality, and with it their religion and their own souls through devotion to selfish and material aims. This is the fate against which the prophet warns them in *v.* 2; and the salvation he offers is a personal interest in the new covenant, or membership in the kingdom of God. To this they are freely invited, with the assurance that there they shall find the satisfaction and blessedness that a life of worldliness can never yield.

1. *every one that thirsteth*] in a figurative sense, primarily of the weariness and discontent of exile (cf. xli. 17, xliv. 3), but also of conscious need in general.

come (lit. "go" and so throughout) *ye to the waters*] The image is probably connected with xli. 18, the miraculous fountain opened by Jehovah for the relief of His people ("wells of salvation," ch. xii. 3). A reference to the cry of the water-sellers in the streets of an Oriental city is less natural.

and he that hath no money] In the East access to a well has often to be paid for. According to the Heb. accents this clause should be joined to the preceding,—"even he that hath no money"—in apposition with "thirsty." The word for *buy* is connected with a noun meaning "grain" and is only used of buying corn. It should probably be so understood in both cases here, although in the second its government extends over two similar objects. The last clause must then be rendered, **buy corn without money, and without price wine and milk.**

2. Whilst the religious life is a receiving without spending, the worldly life is a continual spending without lasting profit or satisfaction.

Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not a bread?

And your labour for *that which* satisfieth not?

Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good,

And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear, and come unto me:

Hear, and your soul shall live;

And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,

Even the sure mercies of David.

spend money] lit. "weigh silver." *your labour*] your earnings (as ch. xlv. 14).

hearken diligently &c.] Or, **if ye but hearken to me ye shall eat good, and your soul shall &c.** (See Davidson's *Syntax*, § 86 c; and § 132 b).

delight itself (ch. lviii. 14, lxvi. 11) *in fatness*] the choicest and most nourishing food (cf. ch. xxv. 6).

3—5. The offer of vv. 1, 2 is summed up in the promise of an everlasting covenant. See ch. xlii. 6, xlix. 8; and cf. lxi. 8; Jer. xxxii. 40, xxxi. 31—33.

Incline your ear &c.] The condition imposed is simply the consent and submission of the heart to the divine will.

an everlasting covenant...the sure mercies of David] i.e. the mercies (lovingkindnesses) irrevocably promised to David and his house. Comp. the "Last Words of David," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5 ("an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and secured"), Ps. xviii. 50 ("shewing lovingkindness...to David and to his seed for ever"), lxxxix. 28 ("for ever will I keep my lovingkindness to him, and my covenant is sure to him"), and v. 49; and the great promise to which all these passages point, 2 Sam. vii. 8—16. The comparison of the everlasting covenant to these Davidic "mercies" cannot mean simply that the one is as sure as the other. It is identity rather than comparison that is implied, the idea being that the contents of the covenant are the same as the mercies promised to David, and that it will be the fulfilment of the hopes that clustered round the Davidic dynasty. But an intricate question arises with respect to the sense in which this fulfilment is to be understood in the next two verses.

4, 5. (a) Most modern authorities hold that the person spoken of in v. 4 is the historical David, and that vv. 4 and 5 institute a parallel between the position he occupied in the heathen world of his time and that which Israel shall occupy in the future; the thought expressed, therefore, is that the Messianic hope is transferred from the dynasty to the nation. The view is thus succinctly stated by Driver; "as David became ruler of subject nations (2 Sam. viii.), a knowledge of his religion, however imperfect, spread among them; thus he was a 'witness' to them. This position of David is idealised in Ps. xviii. 43

- 4 Behold, I have given him *for* a witness to the people,
A leader and commander to the people.

(‘Thou makest me a *head of nations*; a people *whom I have not known shall serve me*’); and the position, as thus idealised, is here enlarged, and extended in a *spiritual* sense to Israel (v. 5).” (*Isaiah*², p. 156.) (b) Others think that the reference in v. 4 is to the future Messianic king (who is called David in Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f), so that the two verses represent under two aspects the future greatness of Israel. (c) An intermediate position is taken by some, viz., that v. 4 goes back to the promise made to David, but regards it as one destined to be fulfilled in the person of his son the Messiah. It is very difficult to decide between these conflicting explanations. Against (b) and (c) it is urged (1) that the tenses in v. 4 are perfects and are naturally understood of the historic past, since those of v. 5 are futures. (2) The idea of a personal Messiah appears nowhere else in the prophecy. (3) A further objection, which however savours of fastidiousness, is that the Messiah is never named David *absolutely*, even in Jer. xxx. and Ezek. xxxiv. On the other side it may be said, (1) that the distinction of tense is accounted for by the fact that v. 4 speaks of what is really past (viz. Jehovah’s decree concerning the Messiah), whereas v. 5 refers to a consequence still to be manifested. (2) Although the idea of the Messiah is not found elsewhere in the book, there is nothing in the prophet’s conceptions inconsistent with it; where he thinks of Israel as a restored nation he will naturally think of it as represented by a Davidic king. (3) Neither in the fundamental passage (2 Sam. vii.) nor in any of those which point back to it (2 Sam. xxiii.; Ps. xviii., lxxxix.) is anything said of David being a “witness” to the true religion; and it could hardly occur to anyone to think of him as in the *first* instance a witness and in the *second* a prince. The third view (c) seems on the whole the best; the original covenant guarantees an endless dominion to the family of David, and after the restoration this will assume a spiritual character and expand into universal empire in the reign of the Messiah. This interpretation, however, is complicated by the further question as to the relation of the Messiah to the Servant of the Lord. If the Servant be the ideal Israel there is of course no difficulty; the two conceptions stand side by side and are independent. But if he be an individual, he is almost necessarily to be identified with the ideal king, although features are thus introduced into the portrait of the Messiah of which hardly a trace is found in the subsequent literature, until the conception of Messiahship through suffering and death was realised in Christ.

4. Behold, I have given him] Better, I have appointed him; or, if we adopt the view (a) above, “I set him” (aorist).

for a witness] of Jehovah’s power and faithfulness (cf. xliii. 10, xliv. 8).

to the people] peoples (as R.V.).

a leader] The word *nāgīd* (ruler or prince) is used in 2 Sam. vii. 8 of David’s kingship over Israel.

Behold, thou shalt call a nation *that* thou knowest not, ⁵
 And nations *that* knew not thee shall run unto thee
 Because of the LORD thy God,
 And for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified
 thee.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, ⁶
 Call ye upon him while he is near:
 Let the wicked forsake his way, ⁷
 And the unrighteous man his thoughts:
 And let him return unto the LORD, and he will have
 mercy upon him;
 And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, ⁸
 Neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, ⁹
 So are my ways higher than your ways,
 And my thoughts than your thoughts.
 For as the rain cometh down, ¹⁰

5. *thou* (Israel) *shalt call a nation &c.*] i.e. many a nation (see on ch. xxv. 3) hitherto unknown to thee.

because of the LORD &c.] Cf. ch. xlix. 7.

glorified thee] Cf. xlv. 23, xlix. 3.

6, 7. The call to repentance, because of the nearness of the kingdom of God.

while he may be found...while he is near] in the "acceptable time" the "day of salvation" (ch. xlix. 8). Comp. further Jer. xxix. 12—14.

7. *the unrighteous man*] lit., "the man of evil" or falsehood.

8, 9. Jehovah's thoughts transcend those of man as much as the heaven is higher than the earth. The point of the contrast is not the moral quality of the Divine thoughts as opposed to those of the "wicked"; the thoughts and ways of Jehovah are His purposes of redemption, which are too vast and sublime to be measured by the narrow conceptions of despairing minds (xl. 27 f.). Comp. Jer. xxix. 11 ("I know the thoughts that I entertain towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope"), Mic. iv. 12. The verses, therefore, furnish a motive not merely for repentance but also for eager and expectant hope.

10, 11. This purpose of salvation is embodied in the word which goes forth from Jehovah's mouth. The "word" is conceived as endowed with a self-fulfilling energy (see on ch. ix. 8); and its silent but irresistible efficacy is set forth by a beautiful comparison from nature. The same idea was expressed in ch. xl. 8.

as the rain cometh down &c.] The image is suggested by "the heavens" in v. 9.

And the snow from heaven,
 And returneth not thither,
 But watereth the earth,
 And maketh it bring forth and bud,
 That it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the
 eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:
 It shall not return unto me void,
 But it shall accomplish that which I please,
 And it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

12 For ye shall go out with joy,
 And be led forth with peace:
 The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you
into singing,

And all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.
 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,
 And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle
 tree:

And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
 For an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

56 Thus saith the LORD,
 Keep ye judgment, and do justice:
 For my salvation *is* near to come,

but watereth] Rather, **without having watered** &c.
seed to the sower and bread to the eater] Cf. 2 Cor. ix. 10.

11. *return...void*] **empty**, having achieved nothing, as 2 Sam. i. 22.
but it shall accomplish] **without having accomplished**, as in v. 10.

12, 13. The joyful exodus from Babylon; this is the "thing whereto
 Jehovah has sent" His word.

and be led forth] by Jehovah in person, ch. xl. 10, lii. 12. Cf. Mic.
 ii. 13.

shall clap their hands] Ps. xcvi. 8; Ezek. xxv. 6.

13. The word for *thorn* occurs again only in ch. vii. 19. That for
brier (*širpād*) is unknown. LXX. renders κόρυφα (*fleabane*). All that
 can be said is that some desert plant is meant. On *fir-tree* (*cypress*)
 and *myrtle tree*, see on ch. xli. 19.

for a name...for a sign] i.e. a memorial to His praise. The meaning
 appears to be that the marvellous vegetation so often alluded to as
 springing up in the desert as the procession of the redeemed passes
 through, shall remain throughout the future ages as a monument to
 Jehovah. It shews at least (Dillmann, etc.) that the conception is not
 to be regarded as a mere poetical figure.

And my righteousness to be revealed.
Blessed *is* the man *that* doeth this,

2

CH. LVI. 1—8. REMOVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES OF
EUNUCHS AND PROSELYTES.

(1) The passage opens with a general exhortation to righteous conduct and a correct religious attitude, to be manifested by a strict regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath (*vv.* 1, 2). (2) The main subject of the oracle is then introduced, viz., the fears entertained by foreigners and eunuchs that they would be excluded from participation in the blessings of the covenant (*v.* 3). (3) To the latter class is promised the signal honour of a monument in the Temple and a name "better than sons and daughters," i.e. more than compensating for the loss of that perpetuation through posterity of which a cruel fate had deprived them (*vv.* 4, 5). (4) In like manner the "sons of the stranger" are reassured by the confirmation of their right to a full share in the worship of the new Temple (*vv.* 6, 7*a*). (5) The principle on which this privilege rests is stated in all its breadth and spirituality, viz., the destiny of the religion of Israel to supersede distinctions of race and to unite men of all nations in the common worship of the true God (7*b*, 8).

The short oracle stands in no very close connexion either with what precedes or with what follows. Although it has often been treated as an appendix to ch. lv., its real affinities seem rather to be with the group of prophecies which follow. Like them it presents features which are thought by some recent critics to point to a period subsequent to the return of the first exiles from Babylon (see Introduction, pp. lv—lx). It is urged that the religious status of the two classes referred to would hardly become a practical question until the new community was formed; that the adhesion of proselytes is spoken of by the second Isaiah as a natural consequence of Israel's exaltation (xliv. 5), and that nothing that happened prior to the release of the Jews is likely to have given rise to such misgivings as are expressed in *v.* 3. Further, that the most obvious inference from *vv.* 7*b*, 8 is that the Temple is already in existence, and that *part* of Israel has already been gathered. These indications, taken in conjunction with many references in chs. lvii. ff., render it probable that we are here face to face with the problems raised by the situation of the new Jewish community in Palestine.

1, 2. The exhortation to righteousness is based on the nearness of Jehovah's salvation (cf. xlv. 13, lv. 6). *justice* should be **righteousness** (as in R.V.), the same word as in the last line of the verse, but in a different sense. In the first case righteousness means conformity to the law of God (cf. lviii. 2), in the second it is, as often, equivalent to salvation. The thought that salvation is near is as characteristic of the later chapters of this book as of chs. xl.—lv. (see lvii. 14, lviii. 8 ff., lix. 15 ff., lx. 1 ff., lxii. 6 &c.), but it is equally prominent in the post-Exilic prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The establishment of the Jews in their own land had not realised the glorious predictions connected with it in xl.—lv.; yet the conviction remained

And the son of man *that* layeth hold on it;
That keepeth the sabbath from polluting it,
And keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

- 3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying,
The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people:
Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I *am* a dry tree.

immoveable that the final act of redemption was at hand, and was retarded only by the sin of the people.

2. The blessing attached to *v. 1* extends to mankind in general (note the expressions *man* and *son of man*), i.e. to all who comply with the conditions of membership in the Jewish community.

that layeth hold on it] Better as R.V. *that holdeth fast by it* (and so *v. 4* and *v. 6*).

that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it (R.V.)] (i.e. "so as not to profane it," so *v. 6*). The same emphasis on Sabbath observance appears in ch. lviii. 13, and so in Ezek. xx. 12 ff., xxii. 8, 26 (cf. Jer. xvii. 19 ff.). Although one of the most ancient of Israel's religious institutions (Ex. xx. 8; Deut. v. 15; Am. viii. 5) the Sabbath acquired peculiar significance during the Exile, when the ordinances of public worship were suspended and the Sabbath and circumcision became the chief external badges of fidelity to the covenant of which it was the sign (Ex. xxxi. 13, 14; Ezek. xx. 12).

from doing any evil] such offences as are specified in lviii. 4 ff., lix. 3 f.

3. *the son of the stranger* means simply the individual foreigner (R.V. *the stranger*), not one whose father was a foreigner.

The LORD hath utterly separated] Render with R.V., *will surely separate*. The case supposed is that of a foreigner who has *joined himself to the LORD*, i.e. has become a proselyte by accepting the symbols of Jewish nationality (circumcision, &c.), but now has reason to fear that his qualifications will be disallowed. This anxiety is hardly to be explained by the law of Deut. xxiii. 3—8; for the regulations there laid down apply only to Moabites, Ammonites, Egyptians and Edomites; and the general tendency of the legislation is in favour of the religious rights of proselytes. (See the exhaustive monograph of Bertholet, *Die Stellung der Israeliten und der Juden zu den Fremden*, 1896.) It is more likely that the immediate cause of apprehension was some manifestation of an exclusive and intolerant spirit amongst the leaders of the new Jerusalem. Against this spirit (if it existed) the prophet's words enter a strong protest (see *vv. 6, 7*).

the eunuch] Such persons are excluded from the congregation by Deut. xxiii. 1. On that passage Prof. W. R. Smith remarks that "Presumably the original sense of this rule was directed not against the unfortunate victims of Oriental tyranny and the harem system, but against the religious mutilation of the Galli" &c. (Driver's *Deuteronomy*, p. 259). If this be so, the present passage need not be regarded as

For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep ⁴
 my sabbaths,
 And choose *the things* that please me,
 And take hold of my covenant;
 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my ⁵
 walls
 A place and a name better than *of sons* and *of daughters* :
 I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be
 cut off.
 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to ⁶
 the LORD,
 To serve him, and to love the name of the LORD,
 To be his servants,
 Every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it,

superseding the Deuteronomic law; it may be only a protest against its extension to cases which it did not contemplate; for it is certain that those here referred to *were* "the unfortunate victims of Oriental tyranny."

I am a dry tree] He could not become the head of a family in Israel, and therefore felt that he had no real and permanent share in the hopes of the nation.

4, 5. In spite of his disability the God-fearing eunuch shall be recognised as a worthy member of the congregation of Jehovah, and his name shall be had in everlasting honour in the new Israel.

that keep my sabbaths] For the expression, cf. Lev. xix. 3, 30, xxvi. 2, &c.

hold fast (as v. 2) *my covenant*] by conscientious obedience.

5. *a place*] **a monument**; lit., "a hand." There seems no reason to doubt that the promise is to be understood literally. An illustration of what is meant is found in 2 Sam. xviii. 18, where we read that Absalom, in the prospect of dying childless, erected the pillar to his own memory which was known as "*Absalom's hand*" (cf. also 1 Sam. xv. 12, R.V. marg.). The case of those here spoken of is precisely similar. They have "no son to keep their name in remembrance," but their memory shall be perpetuated by a monument erected within the Temple-walls; and such a memorial, testifying to the esteem of the whole community, is **better** (and more enduring) **than sons and daughters**.

6, 7. The answer to the misgivings of proselytes (v. 3).

to serve him] Better as R.V. **to minister unto him**. The verb is used of honourable personal service (Gen. xxxix. 4, xl. 4), and especially of the priestly service of God at the sanctuary. It is found again in ch. lx. 7, 10, lxi. 6.

to love the name of the LORD] Cf. Deut. vi. 5, xi. 1, &c.

to be his servants] i.e. worshippers (a different word from that used above).

- And taketh hold of my covenant ;
 7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,
 And make them joyful in my house of prayer :
 Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted
 upon mine altar ;
 For mine house shall be called a house of prayer
 for all people.
 8 The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel
 saith,
 Yet will I gather *others* to him, besides those that are
 gathered unto him.

7. Foreigners who fulfil these conditions have full access to the sanctuary.

make them joyful] "cause them to rejoice." The phrase is formed from a common Deuteronomic expression for taking part in the Temple ritual: to "rejoice before Jehovah" (Deut. xii. 7, 12, 18, &c.).

my house of prayer] The Temple is the place where prayer is answered; see 1 Kings viii. *passim*, esp. vv. 29 f., and 41—43.

The *sacrifices* of proselytes are referred to in the Law: Num. xv. 14 ff.; Lev. xxii. 18 ff., xvii. 8 ff.

for mine house...people] (R.V., rightly, **for all peoples**) Cited by our Lord, Matt. xxi. 13; Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46. The emphasis lies on the last words; that the Temple is a house of prayer has been already said, what is now added is that it shall be so to men of all nationalities.

8. *The Lord GOD...saith*] **Saith the Lord Jehovah** &c. The formula usually *follows* the sentence to which it refers; here it introduces it, as ch. i. 24; Zech. xii. 1; Ps. cx. 1.

which gathereth the dispersed of Israel] Cf. ch. xi. 12; Ps. cxlvii. 2.

Yet will I gather others &c.] Lit. "I will yet further gather to him, to his gathered ones." "His gathered ones" is the antithesis to the "dispersed" above. The language certainly suggests (though it may not absolutely *prove*) that a partial gathering has taken place: the promise is that yet more shall be gathered, and, amongst these, men from "all peoples."

CH. LVI. 9—LVII. 21. A PROTEST AGAINST THE UNWORTHY SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S FLOCK, AND THE ARROGANT HEATHENISM BY WHICH IT IS THREATENED; FOLLOWED BY A MESSAGE OF CONSOLATION TO TRUE ISRAELITES.

This sombre and impassioned discourse is composed of three parts:

i. ch. lvi. 9—lvii. 2.—The defenceless condition of the community, due to the incompetence of its spiritual leaders.

(1) All the wild beasts of the field and the forest are invited to come and devour the unprotected flock (v. 9). (2) For its rulers neglect their duty; they are inefficient as dumb dogs, they are slothful, greedy and

All ye beasts of the field, come to devour,
Yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

9

sensual (*vv.* 10—12). (3) In consequence of their incapacity the righteous perish, none regarding their fate (*lvii.* 1, 2).

ii. *lvii.* 3—13 *a.* A bitter tirade against an insolent and aggressive paganising party, animated by a contemptuous hostility towards the true religion.

(1) This party, which is characterised as a bastard and hybrid race, the illegitimate offspring of an adulterer and a harlot, is summoned to the bar to hear the Divine sentence on their career of flagrant idolatry (*vv.* 3, 4). (2) The indictment follows, in the form of a recital of the varied heathen rites to which they were addicted (*vv.* 5—9), and in which with infatuated perversity they still persist in spite of all the teachings of experience (*vv.* 10, 11). (3) Judgement is then pronounced; Jehovah will unmask the hypocrisy of their pretended righteousness, and leave them to the protection of the false deities whom they have so diligently served, but who shall be unable to save them (*vv.* 12, 13).

iii. *vv.* 14—21. The prophet now turns with a message of comfort to the depressed and contrite people of God. The obstacles in the way of their salvation shall be removed (*v.* 14); Jehovah, whose condescension brings Him near to the lowly in heart, will at length avert His anger, and bring healing and peace (*vv.* 15—19); only the wicked who persist in their impenitence are excluded from the promised blessing (*vv.* 20, 21).

lvi. 9—*lvii.* 2. Denunciation of the worthless rulers of the Jewish community.—The difficulty of supposing that this passage refers to the state of things in the Exile is obvious. Israel is compared to a flock in charge of its own shepherds; and these shepherds are responsible both for the internal disorders from which it suffers, and the outward dangers which threaten it. An invitation to the wild beasts (the heathen nations) to come and devour a people already “robbed and spoiled” (*xlii.* 22) by foreign conquest, is almost inconceivable. It is of course possible, as many scholars hold, that the verses are extracted from a pre-exilic prophecy; but the description is at least as applicable to the conditions which existed after the return from Babylon. The books of Malachi and Nehemiah reveal incidentally a state of affairs which would go far to account for the dark picture here presented of the ruling classes in the restored community.

9. The apostrophe to the wild beasts is suggested by the following comparison of the people to an ill-guarded and therefore defenceless flock. That a new chastisement at the hands of the heathen is actually contemplated need not be assumed. A close parallel even in expression is found in *Jer.* *xii.* 9; cf. *Ezek.* *xxxiv.* 5, 8.

10—12. The delinquencies of the rulers. The *watchmen* are the spiritual leaders of the community, who in the earlier post-exilic period were the priests and the prophets (see *Neh.* *vi.* 10—14). Elsewhere the word is used metaphorically only of the prophets (*Jer.* *vi.* 17; *Ezek.* *iii.* 17, *xxxiii.* 2 ff.) and to them the description here chiefly applies, although there may be no reason for excluding the priests, with whom the higher

- 10 His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant,
They *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark;
Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.
- 11 Yea, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can never have enough,
And they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand:
They all look to their own way,
Every one for his gain, from his quarter.
- 12 Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine,

authority lay, and who shared in the vices here specified. These guides are *blind*, not discerning the evils of the time, and *dumb*, afraid to speak out against them.

they are all ignorant] Lit. "they all of them know not." Several codices of the LXX. supply an infinitive (*ἴσθαι*), by which the sense and parallelism are improved (cf. the similar phrase in v. 11 "they know not how to observe": E.V. "cannot understand").

dumb dogs, they cannot bark] in contrast to the true prophet, who "cries aloud and spares not," shewing the people their transgressions (see ch. lviii. 1; cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 1 ff.), and specially gives warning of the approach of an enemy; Ezek. xxxiii. 6. Sheep-dogs are mentioned in Job xxx. 1.

sleeping] R.V. "dreaming," better *raving*. The word, which occurs only here, means in Arabic to talk deliriously in sickness. Cheyne suggests that it contains a play on the word for "seers," from which it differs in a single letter (*hōzīm* and *hōzīm*).

loving to slumber] The laziness of the dog was proverbial amongst the Arabs: "he delays like a sleepy hound" (Gesenius).

11. The first line reads, **And the dogs are greedy** (lit. "strong of soul," i.e. appetite), **they know not how to be satisfied**. The charge of cupidity and of selling oracles for gain is one frequently brought against the false prophets (Mic. iii. 5, 11; Jer. vi. 13; Ezek. xiii. 19, xxii. 25); a contemporary instance may be the incident of Shemaiah (Neh. vi. 10 ff.). That the priesthood was infected with the same vice of covetousness is shown by Mal. i. 12; on the upper classes generally see Neh. v. 7 ff.

and they are shepherds &c.] The meaning can hardly be that those who have been called dogs are really the shepherds of the flock; but it is not easy to obtain a satisfactory sense. Cheyne renders "and these, pastors as they are," taking "pastors" in the figurative sense of rulers. Dillmann with a slight change of the text reads "and even these, the shepherds," supposing that a class of persons different from the "watchmen" (prophets) are now spoken of, viz., the nobles and elders. On any view the sentence is awkward; it adds nothing to the thought, and may originally have been a marginal gloss.

they all look to their own way] R.V. **they have all turned to their own way**; all pursue their selfish interests (cf. liii. 6).

from his quarter] Render, **without exception**, as Ezek. xxv. 9; Gen. xix. 4. The word, however, is not in LXX.

12. As an illustration of their highest idea of enjoyment, one of these

And we will fill ourselves with strong drink;
And to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more
abundant.

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth *it* to heart: 57
And merciful men *are* taken away, none considering
That the righteous is taken away from the evil *to come*.
He shall enter *into* peace:
They shall rest in their beds,

watchmen is introduced inviting his fellows to a prolonged carousal. Cf. ch. v. 11 f., 22, xxviii. 1, 7 f.; Mic. ii. 11.

we will fill ourselves &c.] a coarse bacchanalian expression: "we will swill strong drink."

and *much more abundant*] Rather, as R.V. (a day) great beyond measure!

lvii. 1, 2. The most alarming feature of the situation, though the least noticed, is the gradual removal of the righteous members of the community. Comp. Ps. xii. 1.

merciful men] lit., *men of piety* (cf. ch. lv. 7, xxviii. 14).

none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come] The idea conveyed by this rendering is that the natural death of many good men was a divine intimation, little heeded by the community, that some great calamity was impending. The translation is perfectly admissible, and the thought is in accordance with the religious sentiment of the O.T. (cf. 2 Ki. xxii. 20); yet it is doubtful if we are entitled to read so much into the prophet's language. There is nothing to indicate that "the evil" is future, nor is it likely that the prophet has in view a future of terror for the righteous. The clause may be equally well rendered *For the righteous is swept away before the evil*; and this is probably all that is meant. The "evil" is the prevailing wickedness and oppression caused by the misgovernment described in lvi. 10—12. The words "none considering" are parallel to "no man layeth it to heart," and a new distich is commenced with the word "For," thus—

For the righteous is swept away before the evil; he enters into
peace:

They rest in their beds, each one that walked in uprightness.
The "peace" and "rest" spoken of are those of the grave (Job iii. 13 ff.), the "bed" is the bier or coffin; cf. 2 Chron. xvi. 14; Ezek. xxxii. 25. The same word is used of the sarcophagus in the Phœnician inscription of Eshmunazar ("the lid of this bed").

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

The same feeling is expressed with great pathos in an eloquent passage of the book of Job (iii. 13 ff.). It is a sentiment that has appealed to the human mind in all ages; but to the O.T. believers it brought no relief from the shuddering recoil from death expressed in other passages, nowhere more forcibly than in the words of Job himself.

Each one walking in his uprightness.

- 3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress,
The seed of the adulterer and the whore.

each one that walked, &c.] i.e. every one who led a simple, straightforward, upright life; cf. Prov. iv. 25—27. The clause is an extension of the subject of the sentence.

3—13. Invective against an idolatrous party.—With regard to the reference of this obscure and difficult passage the following points have to be noticed: (1) The scenery of vv. 5, 6 is unmistakeably Palestinian (wadis, clefts of the rock, terebinths). (2) Several of the rites specified bear the complexion of Canaanitish heathenism, and could not have been performed in Babylonia. (3) The opening words ("But ye") seem to imply that the people addressed are distinct from those whose leaders are denounced in lvi. 10—12. (4) Those spoken of are animated by contempt and hatred of the cause and people of Jehovah (v. 4), while at the same time they advance pretensions to "righteousness" or correctness of religious standing (v. 12). (5) They have persisted in their abominations down to the time of the prophecy (vv. 10—13).

On the supposition that the prophecy was written after the return from Babylon, there is some plausibility in Duhm's view that the party here addressed is the Samaritan community. This theory is at all events simpler than that advocated by the majority of critics, who have felt the force of the objections against exilic authorship, and have accordingly supposed that the passage (or its original) was written at some time previous to the Captivity and borrowed by the great prophet of the Exile as a warning against idolatrous tendencies which still manifested themselves in Babylon. (See further Introduction, pp. lvii, lix.) The passage, however, may rather refer to a paganised Judæan population, closely akin to the Samaritans of the North, and cultivating friendly relations with them. There was a serious danger that the struggling Jewish community formed by the returned Exiles should be dragged down to the level of their semi-pagan neighbours.

3, 4. Indignant summons to the apostate community.

But draw near hither] Better, *But as for you, draw near hither* &c. to hear your doom (cf. xli. 1, xlv. 20, xlviii. 16).

ye sons of a sorceress] The most galling insult to an Oriental is to revile his mother (see 1 Sam. xx. 30). By the use of the phrase here the persons addressed are described as nursed in witchcraft and superstition.

seed of an adulterer and a whore] Cf. Ezek. xvi. 3, 45 ("thy father an Amorite, thy mother a Hittite"). The words are not to be pressed as containing a specific allusion to the mixed origin of the Samaritans (2 Ki. xvii. 24 ff.); they simply describe the degenerate character of the idolatrous religion to which these apostate Israelites were addicted.

Against whom do ye sport yourselves?

Against whom make ye a wide mouth, *and* draw out the tongue?

Are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,

Inflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree,

Slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

4. On the contemptuous attitude of the Samaritans towards the Jews, see Neh. iv. 1—4, and comp. ch. lxvi. 5.

sport yourselves] Lit. "take your delight" (ch. lv. 2, lviii. 14, lxvi. 11); only here used of malevolent satisfaction.

make a wide mouth] Ps. xxxv. 21.

are ye not &c.] Are you not yourselves the proper objects of derision and abhorrence?

5 ff. Description of the varied idolatries to which they were devoted.

Inflaming yourselves with idols] Rather, as R.V., **Ye that inflame yourselves among the oaks** (or "terebinths," the same word in ch. i. 29, lxi. 3). The A.V. follows the chief ancient Versions in taking the last word to be the plural of that for "god"; but it is never used expressly of an idol or false god (not even in Ex. xv. 11 or Dan. xi. 36). The reference is, if not to the actual primitive tree-worship (traces of which are still found in Palestine), at least to that modification of it in which the sacred tree became a place of sacrifice and the scene of the licentious rites indicated by the expression "inflame yourselves." Comp. Hos. iv. 13.

under every green (i.e. evergreen) *tree*] Cf. Deut. xii. 2; Jer. ii. 20, iii. 6; Ezek. vi. 13; 1 Ki. xiv. 23; 2 Ki. xvii. 10 &c.

slaying the children (Ezek. xvi. 21)] i.e. sacrificing them either to Jehovah or some false deity (Baal or Molech). On the subject of human sacrifice in Israel consult the notes in Davidson's *Ezekiel* (*Camb. Bible for Schools, &c.*), pp. 107 f., 143. Cf. Jer. vii. 31, xix. 5; Ezek. xx. 25, xxiii. 39; 2 Ki. iii. 27, xvi. 3, xxi. 6; Mic. vi. 7; Lev. xviii. 21; Deut. xii. 31, &c., and 2 Ki. xvii. 31.

in the valleys (or wadis, dry watercourses) *under the cliffs of the rocks*] Probably weird and desolate places were chosen by preference for these revolting rites, although this is the only passage where such a thing is suggested.

6. As commonly explained, the verse refers to the worship of stone fetishes; but this is very doubtful. It is obvious, indeed, that by the **smooth (ones) of the wadi** some objects of worship are denoted, but it is necessary to suppose that they were smooth *stones*. The expression "smooth ones" (*halqê*) is chosen for the sake of a play of words between it and "portion" (*hêleg*). If we take it literally it is of course natural to think of stones worn smooth by the winter torrents (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 40), although even then there is force in Duhm's observation that

- 6 Among the smooth *stones* of the stream *is* thy portion;
 They, they *are* thy lot:
 Even to them hast thou poured a drink offering,
 Thou hast offered a meat offering.
 Should I receive comfort in these?
- 7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy
 bed:
 Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.
- 8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up
 thy remembrance:

such featureless objects were least of all likely to be chosen as fetishes. (See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*³, Vol. II. p. 144 f.) But the word occurs in the metaphorical sense of "slippery," flattering, deceitful (Ezek. xii. 24; cf. Prov. vii. 5, 21, xxix. 5; Ps. v. 9, &c.); and such a term might readily be applied to false gods of any kind (cf. e.g. "lies" in Am. ii. 4). We may therefore render (following Duhm), "In the deceivers of the wadi is thy portion"; although the special connexion of the deities with the wadi remains obscure.

thy portion] As Jehovah is said to be the portion of His people (Deut. iv. 19; Jer. x. 16; Ps. xvi. 5, cxlii. 6) so these deceitful beings are the portion of those who do homage to them in the manner described in the second half of the verse.

thou hast offered a meat-offering] or, more generally, **an oblation**, as R.V. (see on ch. i. 13).

should I receive comfort in these?] Better, as R.V., **shall I be appeased for these things?** i.e. "leave them unpunished." Cf. Jer. v. 9.

Note that from this verse onwards the female personification is employed, indicating that a definite community is addressed.

7. As in the valleys, so on the hill-tops, the people had sacrificed to strange gods. Cf. Hos. iv. 13; Jer. ii. 20; Ezek. vi. 13.

hast thou set thy bed] The image is suggested by the frequent comparison of idolatry (in Israel) to adultery. Cf. Hos. iv. 12; Jer. ii. 20, iii. 2; Ezek. xvi. 25.

8. The first part of the verse seems to allude to some form of household idolatry. Many commentators explain the expression as a violation of the command in Deut. vi. 9, xi. 20. In these passages the Israelites are directed to write certain sentences of Scripture on the doorposts of their houses, and it is supposed that the practice here denounced is placing the texts at the *back* of the door so as to be out of sight! This is an utterly improbable interpretation. The thing called "remembrance" (*zikkarôn*, better **memorial**, as R.V.) must be some heathen emblem, whose exact nature cannot be determined; and from the fact that it stood at the entrance of the house, it may be presumed to have represented the patron deity of the family.

For thou hast discovered *thyself to another* than me,
 and art gone up;
 Thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee *a covenant*
 with them;
 Thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest *it*.
 And thou wentest to the king with ointment,
 And didst increase thy perfumes,
 And didst send thy messengers far off,

for thou hast discovered...bed] The last word appears to be the object to each of the three verbs: **for away from me thou hast uncovered and ascended and enlarged thy bed.** The connexion ("for") may lie in the thought that they sought every possible opportunity of being unfaithful to Jehovah, their household cults being an expression of their irresistible inclination to idolatry.

and made thee a covenant with them &c.] The sense is uncertain: either, "and thou hast made a contract with them" &c. (?); or, substituting a verb meaning "purchase" (in Deut. ii. 6; Hos. iii. 2), "and thou didst procure for thee (some) of those whose bed thou lovest." For the idea, cf. Ezek. xvi. 16 ff., 32 ff.

where thou sawest it] Lit. "thou hast seen a hand." The rendering of E. V. cannot be maintained, but the real meaning of the expression is altogether obscure.

9. Pilgrimages and deputations to the shrines of foreign deities form a fitting conclusion to the enumeration of their idolatries. Another view taken of the verse is that it refers to political embassies sent to court the favour of some great heathen power. This idea derives support from the resemblance of the passage to Ezek. xxiii. 16, 40, but it is out of keeping with the other allusions of the verse. Oil and ointment have nothing to do with politics; on the other hand unguents of various kinds played a great part in the cultus of the Semites. (See W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*², pp. 232 f., 382 f.) And the last line of the verse is most naturally explained as an allusion to infernal deities.

And thou wentest to the king, &c.] Rather, **And thou hast journeyed to Melek with oil.** "Melek" means king, and is here understood by many of the Great King of Assyria or Babylon. But for the reasons given above it is necessary to explain it as the name of a deity. It is, in fact, the word which has come to us in the Hebrew Bible under the form Molech, its proper vowels having been replaced in Jewish tradition by those of *bōsheth*, "shameful thing." (See W. R. Smith, *l.c.* p. 372.) It was a title applied by the Northern Semites to many gods, and even (among the Israelites) to Jehovah, as "king." Here it seems to be used as a proper name, and the verb "journey" shows that a foreign god is meant; possibly, as Duhm thinks, Milkom, the chief god of the Ammonites. The word for "journey," however, is very uncertain; Cheyne amends so as to read: "And thou anointedst thyself for Melek."

thy perfumes] or **ointments.**

and didst send thy messengers far off] Where they could not go in person they sent messengers with offerings.

- And didst debase *thyself even* unto hell.
 10 Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way;
Yet saidst thou not, There is no hope:
 Thou hast found the life of thine hand;
 Therefore thou wast not grieved.
 11 And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that
 thou hast lied,
 And hast not remembered me, nor laid *it* to thy heart?
 Have not I held my peace even of old,
 And thou fearest me not?

and didst debase thyself even unto hell] Rather, **and hast sent deep to Sheol** (lit. "hast deepened [sc. thy sending] to Sheol"), i.e. they sought the favour of the deities of the underworld, by consulting their oracles etc.

10, 11. Although wearied by these idolatries they have persisted in them with an infatuation which has blinded them to their desperate situation, and rendered them indifferent to the fear of Jehovah.

in the greatness of thy way] i.e. "through thy much wandering," thy multifarious religious observances.

There is no hope] Lit. "*desperatum est*"; cf. Jer. ii. 25, xviii. 12 (with a somewhat different shade of meaning).

thou didst find the life of thine hand] A very obscure and variously explained phrase. R.V. **a quickening** (i.e. renewal) of **thy strength** is perhaps the most feasible interpretation, but the peculiar expression is hardly accounted for, unless it be a current proverb.

thou wast not grieved] lit. **sick**, weak and faint. Comp. Jer. v. 3. "Thou hast smitten them and they did not become sick," i.e. did not feel weak.

11. Most critics detect in this verse a milder tone on the part of the Divine speaker, as if He would find a partial excuse for the apostasies of the people in their undue fear of other gods, and distrust of Jehovah, who had so long time kept silence (cf. ch. li. 12 f., xlii. 14). If this impression be right, the theory that a race akin to the Samaritans are addressed at once falls to the ground. Another view is, however, possible. The question of *whom hast thou been afraid and feared?* may imply a simple negative answer,—"thou hast been absolutely fearless." The language of the verse yields itself to either interpretation.

that thou hast lied] Or, "for thou art treacherous."

have not I held my peace, &c.] Or "Is it not so? I have been silent" etc.: "It was because I held my peace that thou didst not fear me, but other gods." Cf. Ps. l. 21 ("These things thou didst and I kept silence" etc.).

even of old] (xlii. 14). The LXX. and Vulg. evidently vocalised the word differently (מְעַלִּים for מְעַלִּים), so as to read "and covered (sc. my eyes)"; (cf. Ps. x. 1; Isa. i. 15).

I will declare thy righteousness, 12
 And thy works; for they shall not profit thee.
 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; 13
 But the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall
 take *them*:
 But he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the
 land,
 And shall inherit my holy mountain;
 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the 14
 way,

12, 13. But Jehovah will no longer be silent; He will proceed to judgement (cf. again Ps. l. 21).

I will declare thy righteousness] must be spoken ironically: "I will expose thy (pretended) righteousness." This might be said of the Samaritans, who claimed to be true worshippers of Jehovah just as ancient Israel had always done (Ezra iv. 2).

and thy works, &c.] Render with R.V. **and as for thy works, they shall not profit thee.**

13. *When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee*] Cf. Jer. ii. 28. The word for "companies" does not occur elsewhere; it means **them which thou hast gathered** (R.V.): **thy rabble** of idols (R.V. marg.) (see Mic. i. 7).

vanity] R.V. **a breath.**

The second half of the verse forms a transition to the next section, which is a promise of salvation to the true Israel.

14—21. In striking contrast to the menacing tone of vv. 3 ff. is the impressive and elevated language in which the prophet now sets forth the gracious thoughts of Jehovah towards His erring but repentant people.

14. *And shall say*] or, **And it shall be said** (R.V. marg.). The speaker is Jehovah ("my people"), not one of the angelic beings of the Prologue. The expression means simply "the word shall go forth."

The image of the highway of salvation is taken from ch. xl. 3 (see also lxii. 10), but seems to be applied somewhat differently. There it meant an actual highway for the return of the exiles through the desert; here, as the context shews, it is only a figure for the removal of spiritual obstacles to the redemption of Israel (v. 17). Such a modification of the conception, although of course no proof of post-exilic authorship, is certainly very intelligible on that hypothesis. After the return of the first band of exiles it became apparent that the inauguration of the Messianic age was not to take the form of a triumphal march of Jehovah and His people across the desert to Canaan. The prophet's bold image of the miraculous highway necessarily lost its primary physical significance, and could be retained only as an emblem of the preparation for that larger deliverance to which the hopes of the post-exilic community were eagerly directed. It is applied, in short, in precisely the same way as at a later time to the preparatory mission of the Baptist (Mark i. 3; John i. 23).

Take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

- 15 For thus saith the high and lofty One
That inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy;
I dwell *in* the high and holy place,
With him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
- 16 For I will not contend for ever,
Neither will I be always wroth:

15. *high and lofty*] An Isaianic phrase, ch. ii. 12 ff., vi. 1 (cf. lii. 13).

that inhabiteth eternity] Rather, "that sitteth (enthroned) for ever."
I dwell in the high and holy place] The strict rendering perhaps is "on high and Holy (as a holy One) I dwell." Cf. lxvi. 1.

of a contrite and humble spirit] **crushed and of a lowly spirit.** The expressions do not necessarily imply what we mean by contrition—the crushing effect of remorse for sin—but only the subdued, self-distrusting spirit which is produced by affliction. Comp. ch. lxvi. 2; Ps. li. 17.

The word "holy" (here used as a proper name, see on ch. xl. 25) and the expressions "high and lofty" seem to shew the influence of Isaiah's vision (ch. vi.). The thought of the verse is very striking. It is the paradox of religion that Jehovah's holiness, which places Him at an infinite distance from human pride and greatness, brings Him near to the humble in spirit (comp. Ps. cxiii. 5, 6, cxxxviii. 6). No contrast is indicated: Jehovah dwells on high *and* (not *but yet*) with the lowly. It would be a mistake, however, to infer that holiness means or even includes gracious condescension. The two attributes are not mutually exclusive, but still less are they identical. The holiness of God is expressed by saying that He dwells on high; His dwelling with the contrite is another fact which manifests a different aspect of His character. Through the discipline of the Exile Israel had come to know God in both characters—as infinitely exalted and infinitely condescending; it had learned that peace with God, the high and lofty One, is reached through humility, which is the recognition of His holiness and majesty.

16. Hardly less remarkable is the motive here assigned for the Divine clemency,—Jehovah's compassion for the frailty of His creatures (Ps. ciii. 9, 13 f., lxxviii. 39). The argument somewhat resembles that of ch. xlv. 18 ff.: it cannot be Jehovah's purpose to undo His own creation. The continuance of His anger would annihilate the souls which He Himself has made; therefore when chastisement has produced the contrite and humble spirit, He relents and shews mercy.

The word for *souls* is that which in Gen. ii. 7 means "breath (of life)," the principle of life in virtue of which man becomes "a living person" (cf. ch. xlii. 5). The parallel *spirit* has the same sense; it is the Divine power by which human life is sustained.

For the spirit should fail before me,
And the souls *which* I have made.

For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and 17
smote him:

I hid me, and was wroth,
And he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

I have seen his ways, and will heal him: 18

I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him
and to his mourners.

I create the fruit of the lips; 19

Peace, peace to *him that is far off*, and to *him that is near*, saith the LORD;

17. *For the iniquity of his covetousness*] The mention of "covetousness" as the typical sin of the community here addressed affords some support to the theory that the post-exilic Jews are referred to. See Hag. i. 2, 9; Mal. i. 8, 13, 14, iii. 8; Neh. v. These passages shew that a sordid, avaricious spirit was characteristic of the returned exiles, although on the other hand Jer. vi. 13 shews that it was prevalent before the Captivity (cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 31). The same feature is touched on in ch. lvi. 11 and in ch. lviii. The significant thing is that it is specified as the besetting sin of the time, and this again appears to indicate that the people spoken of are distinct from those who were guilty of the more heinous offences enumerated in vv. 5—9.

covetousness is strictly "gain"; (Gen. xxxvii. 26) then **unjust gain**.

I hid me, and was wroth] **hiding myself in my wrath** (lit. "hiding and being wroth"; see Davidson's *Syntax*, § 87 R. 1).

and he went on frowardly] (cf. Jer. iii. 14, 22, xxxi. 22, xlix. 4) lit. "turning away" (R.V. marg.). The meaning can hardly be that the effect of punishment was to harden the people in sin, and that *therefore* Jehovah desists from it. The clause does not give the consequence of the chastisement, but continues the description of the sinful life of the people which had drawn forth the Divine anger.

18. *I have seen his ways*] Either "his sinful ways" or "the amendment of his ways." The first view is perhaps more probable, in which case the words would be better joined to the preceding verse (so Duhm).

and will heal him] Or, "And I will heal him,"—beginning a new sentence. Cf. Hos. vi. 1, xiv. 4; Jer. iii. 22.

For *comforts* read **comfort**.

and to his mourners] (ch. lxi. 2, lxvi. 10). The clause should be joined to the next verse.

19. *And to his mourners I will create fruit of the lips*] "Fruit of the lips" means praise and thanksgiving, as Hos. xiv. 2 (Heb. xiii. 15). Jehovah will create this, cause it to spring forth spontaneously, from those who at present are dumb with sorrow.

Peace, peace to the far off, &c.] The words are still under the government of the verb "create." The contrast of the "far off" and the "near."

And I will heal him.

20 But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,

When it cannot rest,

Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

is probably that between the Jews still in exile, and those who have returned and are "near" to Jerusalem (cf. ch. lvi. 8).

20, 21. Their peace is contrasted with the eternal unrest of the wicked. For the image cf. Jude 13.

when (for) it cannot rest] as Jer. xlix. 23.

21. *There is no peace &c.*] See on ch. xlviii. 22.

CH. LVIII. AN ORACLE ON FASTING AND THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

(1) The prophet announces his commission to expose the sin of his people, especially the formal and perfunctory character of their religious service (vv. 1, 2). (2) He then takes up the question of fasting, which is the immediate occasion of the discourse; in answer to the complaint that their fasts are disregarded by Jehovah (v. 3 a), he asks his hearers if they suppose that the kind of fasting practised by them can possibly be acceptable to God (vv. 3 b—5). (3) In contrast to such unspiritual and hypocritical fasting as theirs, he indicates the nature of the fast required by Jehovah, which consists in justice to the oppressed and kindness to the destitute (vv. 6, 7). (4) When they understand what true religion is and comply with its requirements, their salvation shall no longer tarry, their prayers shall be answered, their darkness turned to light, and the waste places of the land restored (vv. 8—12). (5) A similar promise is attached to the hallowing of the Sabbath-day (vv. 13, 14).

Although only one statutory fast is known to the Law—that of the great Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29)—the practice was readily and spontaneously resorted to in ancient Israel as a means of propitiating the Deity (cf. e.g. Jud. xx. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 6; 1 Ki. xxi. 12; Jer. xxxvi. 9). During the Exile four regular fast-days came to be observed; and it is all but certain that these commemorated special incidents of the fall of Jerusalem (see the Commentaries on Zech. viii. 19). It is probable that such fasts as these, rather than the fast of the Day of Atonement (which may not have been instituted at this time), gave rise to the complaint dealt with in this prophecy. That the mind of the post-exilic community was exercised about these fasts appears from Zech. vii. 1 ff., a passage which presents an instructive parallel to that now before us. The question was put to the priests and prophets in Jerusalem whether the fast-days should not after seventy years' observance be discontinued (vii. 3, 5); and Zechariah replies that if the people will give heed to the divine admonitions through the "former prophets" and practise righteousness and mercy, the Messianic promises shall be fulfilled, and then the fasts shall be turned into days of rejoicing (viii. 19). The

Cry aloud, spare not, 58
 Lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
 And shew my people their transgression,
 And the house of Jacob their sins.
 Yet they seek me daily, 2
 And delight to know my ways,
 As a nation that did righteousness,
 And forsook not the ordinance of their God:
 They ask of me the ordinances of justice;
 They take delight in approaching to God.
 Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest ₃
 not?

answer, in short, is practically identical with the teaching of this chapter. It is of course not impossible that the question of fasting might have been raised during the Exile and answered as it is answered here; but there is nothing in the chapter that can be appealed to in favour of this view.

1. *Cry aloud*] lit. **Cry with the throat**, with the full power of the voice.

shew my people their transgression &c.] The function of the true prophet as distinguished from the false; see Mic. iii. 8, a verse which seems to have been in the prophet's mind.

2. The people indeed are zealous in the performance of their external religious duties, and imagine that this suffices to put them in a right relation to God. They are ostensibly as eager to know the divine will as if they were in reality, and not merely in profession, a people that practised righteousness. A somewhat strained interpretation has been put upon the verse by many modern commentators, who suppose that it refers to the people's desire for a speedy manifestation of Jehovah's righteousness in their favour. This feeling was no doubt in their minds, but it is not expressed here (see below).

they seek me] i.e. **enquire of me**,—the word used of consulting an oracle.

ordinances of justice] not "righteous judgements" on the enemies and oppressors of Israel, but **ordinances of righteousness**, i.e. directions as to how righteousness is to be achieved.

they take delight in approaching to God] R.V. **they delight to draw near to God**. Cf. ch. xxix. 13; Ps. lxxiii. 28. To render "in the approach of God (to judgement)" is arbitrary, and unsuited to the verb "delight."

3. The first half of the verse expresses the people's sense of disappointment at the failure of their efforts to win the favour of Jehovah; the second half begins the prophet's exposure of their hypocrisy. There is an incipient Pharisaism in their evident expectation that by external works of righteousness they would hasten the coming of the Messianic salvation. The prophet also maintains that salvation is conditioned by righteousness on the part of the people; but he insists that the

Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?

Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure,
And exact all your labours.

4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate,
And to smite with the fist of wickedness:

Ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day,
To make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen?

A day for a man to afflict his soul?

Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush,

righteousness which secures the fulfilment of the promises is ethical righteousness, not the mechanical observance of ceremonial forms.

have we afflicted our soul] See below on v. 5.

you find pleasure] Rather **business** (see on ch. xlv. 28), i.e. "you find opportunity to do a profitable stroke of business." Cf. v. 13.

and exact all your labours] Or, as R.V. marg., **and oppress all your labourers**. According to the law of Lev. xvi. 29 a fast implied universal cessation of work, but these men while fasting themselves, extorted from their slaves and hired servants their full tale of work. On slavery in the post-exilic community see Neh. v. 5. The translation "labourers" is somewhat uncertain; the word does not occur elsewhere in this sense.

4. *ye fast for strife and contention* (R.V.)] The fasting made them as irritable as Arabs in the month of Ramadan; it produced a quarrelsome temper which even led to open violence,—"**smiting with godless fist**."

ye shall not fast &c.] Render: **ye do not fast at present so as to make &c.**, i.e. "with your present mode of fasting, your prayers can never reach the ear of Jehovah."

"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

Hamlet, Act III. Scene iii. 97 f.

5. **Should such be the fast that I choose?** Can mere gestures and symbols of humiliation avail anything, along with such evidences of an unspiritual frame of mind?

to afflict his soul] Both here and in v. 3 the phrase expresses what is of moral value in the act of fasting, the repression of sensual impulses through abstinence, &c. It is so used also in Ps. xxxv. 13 ("I humbled my soul through fasting"), and in the laws about fasting it becomes almost a technical expression (Lev. xvi. 29, 31, xxiii. 27, 32; Num. xxix. 7). From it comes the noun *ta'anith* (humiliation), the common term for fasting in late Hebrew (found Ezra ix. 5). How little the true end of fasting was attained in the case of those here addressed has been shewn in v. 4.

And to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*?

Wilt thou call this a fast,

And an acceptable day to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I have chosen?

6

To loose the bands of wickedness,

To undo the heavy burdens,

And to let the oppressed go free,

And *that* ye break every yoke?

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,

7

And that thou bring the poor that are cast out *to thy*
house?

When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;

And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,

8

6, 7. Description of the true fast in which Jehovah delights. The duties enjoined fall under two heads: (1) abstinence from every form of oppression (v. 6), and (2) the exercise of positive beneficence towards the destitute (v. 7). In naming these things as the moral essence of fasting, the prophet may be guided by the principle so often inculcated by our Lord, that he who would obtain mercy from God must shew a merciful disposition towards his fellow-men (Matt. v. 7, vi. 12, xviii. 35 &c.). Or the idea may be that the spirit of self-denial possesses no value before God unless it be carried into the sphere of social duty.

the bands (R.V. **bonds**) *of wickedness*] i.e. unjust and oppressive obligations.

to undo the heavy burdens] Lit. to untie the bands of the yoke.

the oppressed is literally the "broken" (Deut. xxviii. 33; ch. xlii. 3), —bankrupts, whose liberty had been forfeited to their creditors (cf. Neh. v. 5).

7. Comp. Ezek. xviii. 7 f., 16 f.; Job xxxi. 13 ff.

the poor that are cast out] the **vagrant** (homeless) **poor**. The word rendered "vagrant" is peculiar, but is supposed to come from a verb meaning "wander." It occurs with an abstract sense, and along with the abstract noun corresponding to the word here rendered "poor," in Lam. i. 7, iii. 19.

hide not thyself (Deut. xxii. 1, 3, 4) *from thine own flesh*] from thy fellow Israelites (as in Neh. v. 5).

8 ff. When these conditions are complied with, the glory of the latter days shall break on the regenerated community.

thy light] (ch. lx. 1, 3), the emblem of salvation; cf. ch. ix. 2.

break forth as the dawn] "Break forth" is the verb used in ch. xxxv. 6; Gen. vii. 11; Ps. lxxiv. 15, of the bursting of waters through a fissure in the earth's surface; by a vivid metaphor the dawn was conceived as "splitting" the heavens and flooding the world with light. The same word occurs on the Moabite Stone (l. 15) in the phrase "from the splitting of the dawn."

- And thine health shall spring forth speedily;
 And thy righteousness shall go before thee;
 The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.
 9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer;
 Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I *am*.
 If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke,
 The putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;
 10 And *if* thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,
 And satisfy the afflicted soul;
 Then shall thy light rise in obscurity,

thine health] **thy healing** (as R.V.), or **thy recovery**. The word (Heb. 'ārākah, Arab. 'arika) seems to mean literally the new flesh which is formed when a wound is healing (see Delitzsch's *Commentary* on the verse); it is used three times by Jeremiah with the sense of recovered health or prosperity; in Neh. iv. 7 (iv. 1 Heb.) and 2 Chr. xxiv. 13 the metaphor is applied to the repairing of damages (in the walls or the Temple). Since v. 12 shews that the prophet has the restoration of ruins in his mind, the coincidence with Neh. iv. 7 is certainly suggestive; but the figure here does not go beyond the general idea of recovered prosperity.

shall go before thee...shall be thy rereward] Comp. ch. lii. 12. It is difficult to say whether *righteousness* means in this case "right vindicated" by outward tokens of Jehovah's favour, or ethical righteousness as described in vv. 6, 7.

9 a. The immediate answer to prayer, in contrast to the complaint of v. 3, is the evidence of harmony re-established between Jehovah and His worshippers; comp. ch. lxxv. 24, xxx. 19.

9 b should be joined to v. 10. The conditions of acceptance with God are recapitulated in terms differing slightly from those of vv. 6, 7.

the putting forth of the finger] a gesture of contempt (Prov. vi. 13) towards the oppressed mentioned in vv. 6, 7. Compare (with Gesenius) the *infamis digitus* (Pers. II. 33).

10. *draw out thy soul to the hungry*] A very peculiar expression. The most natural sense would be "let thy desire go out" &c.; but most commentators rightly feel that the object ("the hungry") demands some more specific definition of duty than this. Hence they take "thy soul" to mean "that in which thy soul delights" (see R.V. marg.), i.e. "thy sustenance" (Cheyne), which is hardly an improvement, and is moreover a rendering not easily to be justified. The Peshitto reads "bread" instead of "soul"; the LXX. has both words (τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ ψυχῆς σου). Since the word "soul" immediately follows (in the original) it is not improbable that there is an error in the text, and that what the prophet wrote was "thy bread." Render therefore **and bestow thy bread on the hungry**. This sense of the verb is guaranteed by a very similar use in Ps. cxliv. 13 (E.V. "afford").

then shall thy light rise &c.] See v. 8.

And thy darkness *be* as the noonday :
 And the LORD shall guide thee continually,
 And satisfy thy soul in drought,
 And make fat thy bones :
 And thou shalt be like a watered garden,
 And like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.
 And *they that shall be* of thee shall build the old ¹¹
 waste places :
 Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many genera-
 tions ;
 And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach,
 The restorer of paths to dwell in.

11. *the LORD shall guide thee*] Cf. ch. lvii. 18 "I will lead him,"—the same verb in Hebr.

satisfy thy soul (cf. v. 10) *in drought*] R.V. "dry places".

make fat thy bones] So the LXX. The verb (which does not elsewhere occur in this form) may mean "make strong" (thy bones). But it is best to accept an old emendation of Secker and Lowth, and read **renew thy strength** (see ch. xl. 29, 31).

like a watered (well-watered, cf. xvi. 9) *garden*] Jer. xxxi. 12.

whose waters fail not] Lit. **deceive not**. From this root comes the technical word 'akzāb, the "deceitful brook" (Jer. xv. 18; Mic. i. 14, R.V.). Comp. John iv. 14.

12. Comp. ch. lxi. 4, xlix. 8. The importance attached to the restoration of the ruined places shews that what the prophet has in view is chiefly the recovery of temporal and political prosperity. It may also throw some light on the date of the prophecy. The description of the ruins as "ancient" suggests a period considerably later than the Exile (which only lasted half a century), although the argument is not one that can be rigorously pressed.

they that shall be of thee] Strictly "some of thee." Weir and Cheyne emend the text and read "thy children" (מִמֶּנִּי for בְּנֶיךָ). König on the other hand (*Syntax*, p. 37) suggests a change of the verb (reading וְנִבְנוּ): "and the wastes shall be built by thee."

the old waste places] Better, **the ancient ruins** (xliv. 26).

the foundations of many generations] might mean places which had been *founded* many generations back, but the correspondence with ch. lxi. 4 seems to shew that foundations which have *lain waste* for many generations are referred to.

The repairer of the breach &c.] The restoration of the walls and highways will be an achievement by which the community is remembered.

paths to dwell in] Cf. Job xxiv. 13.

13, 14. A promise attached to the strict and cheerful observation of the Sabbath. See on ch. lvi. 2.

- 13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,
From doing thy pleasure on my holy day;
 And call the sabbath a delight,
 The holy of the LORD, honourable;
 And shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways,
 Nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine*
own words:
- 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD;
 And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of
 the earth,
 And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father:
 For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath] treating it as "holy ground" (*ἁγίος*). The metaphor is translated into literal terms in the following clause.

from doing thy pleasure] so as not to do thy business (as v. 3).

call the sabbath a delight] Great stress is laid on heartiness in the observance of this command; for a contrast see Am. viii. 5. The next clause must be translated as in R.V. and [sc. call] **the holy of the LORD honourable, and shalt honour it**. "The holy of Jehovah" is a remarkable designation for the Sabbath, and all the expressions of the clause are peculiar.

not doing thine own ways] so as not to do after thy wont (Cheyne). For *pleasure* render, as before, **business**.

nor speaking thine own words] Lit. **a word**, i.e. "idle words"; cf. Hos. x. 4.

14. *Then shalt thou delight thyself*] Better: **Then shalt thou have thy delight**; Job xxii. 26. The same verb as in ch. lvii. 4.

and I will cause thee to ride over the heights of the earth] Apparently a quotation from Deut. xxxii. 13. The meaning is "I will carry thee triumphantly over all obstacles" (cf. Deut. xxxii. 11).

and feed thee with] **and make thee to eat**, i.e. enjoy; cf. ch. i. 19.

CH. LIX. THE HINDRANCES TO ISRAEL'S SALVATION AND THEIR REMOVAL THROUGH THE INTERPOSITION OF JEHOVAH.

The chapter is closely connected in thought with the preceding, and may perhaps be regarded as a continuation of the same discourse. The first verse justifies the utterance of such promises as are contained in the latter part of ch. lviii., and the second explains why they remain as yet unfulfilled. The range of the prophecy is wider than in the former chapter, but the central theme and the historical situation are the same, and, as in the case of chs. lvi.—lviii., the phenomena of the chapter are most naturally accounted for on the assumption of a post-exilic date. In particular the prominence given to abuses of public justice (vv. 4, 14) in the catalogue of social crimes, implies a degree of independence and

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that *it* 59
cannot save;
Neither his ear heavy, that *it* cannot hear:
But your iniquities have separated between you and
your God,
And your sins have hid *his* face from you, that *he* will
not hear.

political responsibility which can hardly be attributed to the Jews in exile.

The chapter falls obviously into three sections:

i. vv. 1—8.—In opposition to the thought naturally arising in the mind of the people, that the obstacle to their deliverance must be impotence or indifference on the part of Jehovah (*v.* 1), the prophet asserts that the true reason of His inactivity is the sin that has come between Him and them (*v.* 2). He points to the flagrant breaches of the moral law of which the community as a whole is guilty (*vv.* 3, 4): and draws an appalling picture of the hopelessly corrupt character and conduct of many of his contemporaries (*vv.* 5—8).

ii. vv. 9—15 *a.*—A pathetic description of the people's vain longing for deliverance and peace (*vv.* 9—11), followed by a confession of the sins which are the cause of their misery (*vv.* 12—15 *a.*). The prophet here identifies himself with the nation and speaks in its name.

iii. vv. 15 *b*—21.—At the middle of *v.* 15 the tone of the discourse suddenly alters; the language of complaint and prayer gives place to that of prophetic anticipation. Since the people is hopelessly entangled in its own sins, and no human champion appears on the scene, Jehovah Himself, represented as a warrior arming for the conflict, undertakes the work of salvation (*vv.* 15 *b*—17). The world-wide consequences of His interposition are then described: destruction to His enemies, manifestation of His divinity to all mankind, and redemption to Zion (*vv.* 18—20). The chapter closes with a promise confirming the gift of the divine spirit and word to the true Israel in perpetuity (*v.* 21).

1, 2. These verses state briefly and forcibly the argument of which the whole chapter is the expansion: not the powerlessness or the indifference of Jehovah, but the sin of the people, is the hindrance to the promised redemption.

1. Behold the hand of Jehovah is not too short (cf. ch. l. 2) to save,

Nor His ear too heavy (ch. vi. 10) to hear.

2. *your iniquities have separated*] Lit. "have been separating." The expression is that used of the firmament in Gen. i. 6; it implies that guilt has been a permanent cause of alienation between Israel and its God.

have hid his face] i.e. caused Him to withdraw His favour (cf. ch. viii. 17). Instead of "his face," the Hebr. has simply "face" as in Job xxxiv. 29. Various explanations are offered of this peculiar expression; perhaps the easiest is that "the Face" had come to be used absolutely of the face of God, like "the Name," "the Word," &c. in later times.

- 3 For your hands are defiled with blood,
 And your fingers with iniquity;
 Your lips have spoken lies,
 Your tongue hath uttered perverseness.
- 4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth:
They trust in vanity, and speak lies;
They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.
- 5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs,

3. *your hands are defiled with blood*] Cf. ch. i. 15.
hath uttered] Better *muttereth* (as R.V.).

4. The first half of the verse should be rendered as R.V.
**None sueth in righteousness,
 And none pleadeth in truth.**

The reference is to the abuse of legal procedure: lawsuits instituted and conducted with absolute disregard of righteousness and truth. Cf. ch. xxix. 21.

calleth] with the sense of "summon" (in *ius vocare*), as in Job ix. 16, xiii. 22.

pleadeth] i.e. "pleadeth a cause", litigates; the same word as in xliii. 26.

The rest of the verse probably continues the same subject, describing the sophistical and mischievous arguments employed by the litigants to make the worse appear the better reason, and subvert the ends of justice. The verbs are infinitives (as in v. 13 and Hos. iv. 2) and should be translated thus:

Trusting in emptiness (lit. "chaos" as xl. 17) **and speaking vanity!**

Conceiving mischief and bringing forth evil!

The last line occurs almost verbatim in Job xv. 35.

5—8. These verses differ somewhat in character from vv. 3 f., and are regarded by Duhm and Cheyne as a quotation from some Psalm or collection of proverbs. In point of fact the first part of v. 7 appears in Prov. i. 16, but probably as an interpolation, since the verse is wanting in the LXX. On the other hand, vv. 7, 8 are partly reproduced in the LXX. recension of Ps. xiv. 3, as in Rom. iii. 10 ff. These facts do not by themselves raise any presumption against the genuineness of the passage in this discourse; and the first image of v. 5 connects itself naturally enough with the conclusion of v. 4. It must be admitted, however, that the description can only apply to a limited class of utter reprobates, and there is some difficulty in conceiving that it can be the continuation of vv. 3, 4, which contain perfectly definite and intelligible accusations against a whole community.

5. *cockatrice' eggs*] or *basilisks' eggs*. See on ch. xi. 8. The figure is expanded in the latter part of the verse, and the meaning seems to be that the persons spoken of brood over and bring to maturity projects of wickedness, whose effects are almost equally fatal to those who acquiesce in them and to those who oppose them.

And weave the spider's web :
 He that eateth of their eggs dieth,
 And that which is crushed breaketh out *into* a viper.
 Their webs shall not become garments, 6
 Neither shall they cover themselves with their works :
 Their works *are* works of iniquity,
 And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
 Their feet run to evil, 7
 And they make haste to shed innocent blood :
 Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity ;
 Wasting and destruction are in their paths.
 The way of peace they know not ; 8
 And *there is* no judgment in their goings :
 They have made them crooked paths :
 Whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

he that eateth of their eggs] (cf. Deut. xxxii. 33) i.e. either he who enters into their schemes, or he who is their victim.

that which is crushed...viper] Should one try to stamp out one of their diabolical plots, its deadly nature will only be the more clearly manifested.

6. Development of the second image of v. 5, the point of comparison being the uselessness for any good social end of the schemes devised by the ungodly.

shall not become garments] i.e. "shall not serve for a garment."

neither shall they cover themselves &c.] Better, **neither shall men cover themselves &c.** (indefinite subj.).

7, 8. Cf. Prov. i. 16; Rom. iii. 15—17.

7. *their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity* (or *evil*)] corresponding to their deeds, v. 6.

wasting and destruction] as ch. li. 19, lx. 18; an alliteration in the Hebr.

in their paths] Lit. **in their highways**, cf. Prov. xvi. 17.

8. *judgment* here means **right** (R.V. marg.).

goings] **tracks**, a common word in the Book of Proverbs.

they have made them &c.] **they have made their paths crooked.** Cf. Prov. ii. 15, x. 9, xxviii. 18.

whosoever goeth therein] i.e. makes common cause with them.

9—11. The sorrow and dejection of the people is depicted in striking and pathetic images. It is the better mind of the community which is here expressed,—its intense desire for the fulfilment of the divine promises, its weariness through hope deferred making the heart sick. The contrast to the buoyant enthusiasm of the second Isaiah is very great, and it is hardly credible that the state of feeling here described should have arisen in the short interval which elapsed between the announcement of deliverance and the actual release from captivity.

- 9 Therefore is judgment far from us,
Neither doth justice overtake us:
We wait for light, but behold obscurity;
For brightness, *but* we walk in darkness.
- 10 We grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if *we had* no eyes:
We stumble at noonday as *in* the night;
We are in desolate places as dead *men*.
- 11 We roar all like bears,
And mourn sore like doves:
We look for judgment, but *there is* none;
For salvation, *but* it is far off from us.
- 12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee,
And our sins testify against us:
For our transgressions *are* with us;

9. *Therefore*] on account of these sins and disorders, and not on account of Jehovah's remissness (vv. 1, 2).

judgment...justice (R.V. **righteousness**) are here again synonyms for salvation, right manifested by a judicial interposition of Jehovah, as in v. 11 and the latter part of ch. lvi. 1.

overtake us] The nation has struggled on its dreary and difficult way in the confident expectation that salvation would not tarry long behind, but hitherto this hope has been disappointed.

10. *We grope for the wall, &c.*] Rather, **along the wall** seeking an outlet. Comp. the very similar passage Deut. xxviii. 29.

we are in desolate places as dead men] R.V. **among them that are lusty we are as dead men**. The A.V. follows the Vulgate, but the rendering "desolate places" seems destitute of any etymological basis. The word, which occurs only here, comes apparently from a root denoting "fatness"; hence the translation of the R.V., which gives a more effective turn to the figure than any other that has been proposed. The soundness of the text, however, is open to suspicion.

11. *We roar* (better **groan**) *all like bears*] Comp. (with Gesenius) Horace, *Epod.* 16. 51:

"Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile."

The comparison would no doubt gain in force if we could suppose, as Duhm hesitatingly suggests, that captive animals, pining for liberty, are meant. But this is not indicated.

On the "mourning" of the dove, cf. ch. xxxviii. 14; Ezek. vii. 16; Nah. ii. 7; and see Davidson's *Ezekiel* (Cambridge Bible), p. 49.

we look for judgment, &c.] returning to the thought of v. 9.

12—15 a. Confession of the sins previously denounced, the prophet speaking in the name of the people.

12. *our sins testify against us*] So Jer. xiv. 7.

our transgressions are with us] present to our conscience, Job xii. 3,

And *as for* our iniquities, we know them;
 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, 13
 And departing away from our God,
 Speaking oppression and revolt,
 Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.
 And judgment is turned away backward, 14
 And justice standeth afar off:
 For truth is fallen in the street,
 And equity cannot enter.
 Yea, truth faileth; 15
 And he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:

xiv. 5 &c.; comp. also Ps. li. 3 ("my transgressions I know, and my sin is before me continually").

13. The sins referred to in v. 12 are enumerated in a series of infinitives (cf. v. 4), which should be construed as in apposition to the terms "sin," "iniquities," &c. employed in the general confession of v. 12.

Rebellion and denial of Jehovah,

and turning back from after our God, etc.

It is doubtful if there is any reference here to the sin of idolatry; the charge of apostasy is perhaps rather to be understood of offences against social morality, which amounted to a renunciation of the authority of Jehovah.

The last two lines deal with sins of speech, committed against men.

revolt is literally "defection," and appears to be used in the same general sense as Deut. xix. 16 of declension from truth and right.

uttering from the heart] The verb here is identical in form with that rendered "mutter" in v. 3 and "mourn" in v. 11. The vocalisation of both the verbs in this clause is anomalous, and should probably be changed (read *hārô, hāgô*).

14. The confession, following the same order as the indictment in vv. 3, 4, proceeds from personal sins to public injustice.

judgment and justice (righteousness) are not the divine vindication of Israel's right (as in v. 9), but the fundamental civic virtues. These, by a bold personification, are conceived as eager to take their rightful place in the administration of justice, but as kept at a distance by the prevailing social corruption. For **truth** (the essential basis of righteousness) **stumbleth in the broad place, and uprightness (R. V.) cannot enter**. The "broad place" is probably the open space at the city gate where cases were decided by the judges (Jer. v. 1 &c.).

15. *Yea, truth faileth*] Lit. **And truth is missing**,—conspicuous by its absence.

maketh himself a prey] i.e. must submit to extortion (Ps. lxxvi. 6). Another, and possibly a better rendering is, "withdraws himself"; compare the peculiar use of the simple verb in Ruth ii. 16 (= "draw out" corn from the sheaf).

And the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him
That *there was* no judgment.

- 16 And he saw that *there was* no man,
And wondered that *there was* no intercessor:
'Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him;
And his righteousness, it sustained him.
- 17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation upon his head;
And he put on the garments of vengeance *for* clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloke.

15b introduces the peroration of the discourse, in which the prophet describes the manner in which salvation shall at last "overtake" the sinful and misgoverned community. The logical development of the argument seems to be arrested by the conviction that the existing situation is hopeless, and only to be terminated through the personal intervention of Jehovah. This conviction clothes itself first of all in a prophetic vision of Jehovah as He appears to judgement; which is followed by an announcement of the consequences of His interposition for the two classes within Israel and for mankind at large. Although the transition in the middle of this verse is abrupt and unexpected there is no sufficient reason to doubt the unity of the discourse.

16. Comp. the closely parallel passage, ch. lxiii. 5.

there was no man] See on ch. l. 2.

no intercessor] Better **none to interpose**, i.e. on behalf of truth and right (cf. Ezek. xxii. 30). Duhm finds in these expressions an allusion to the absence of any human hero to play the rôle assigned to Cyrus in the earlier part of the book. This is perhaps to strain the prophet's language unduly; but see on lxiii. 5.

therefore his arm &c.] Jehovah's only allies in this conflict with wickedness are His own attributes.

brought salvation unto him] "wrought deliverance for Him." Cf. Jud. vii. 2.

That the whole description refers to a future event can hardly be questioned. The perfects in this verse and the next are those of prophetic certainty.

17. The idea of Jehovah as a warrior occurs several times in this book (ch. xlii. 13, xlix. 24 f., lii. 10); but the fully developed image of His arming Himself with His own attributes has no exact parallel in the O.T. (cf. however, ch. xi. 5). It is reproduced and further elaborated in Wisd. v. 17 ff.; and in the N.T. it suggests the figure of the Christian armour (Eph. vi. 14 ff.; 1 Thess. v. 8).

And he put on righteousness as a coat of mail (R.V. marg.). "Righteousness," as in v. 16, is a divine attribute,—zeal for the right, the stedfast purpose to establish righteousness (and its correlate, salvation) on the earth. The word for "clothing" is anomalous, and is omitted by LXX. and Vulg.

zeal] Cf. ch. xlii. 13, ix. 7.

According to *their* deeds, accordingly he will repay, 18
 Fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies;
 To the islands he will repay recompence.
 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, 19
 And his glory from the rising of the sun.
 When the enemy shall come in like a flood,

18—20. The consequences of Jehovah's interposition.

18. *According to their deeds*] Or *deserts*. The word means simply an accomplished deed, either in a good or bad sense; but it is chiefly used in expressions which imply a reference to reward or retribution. In the next line it denotes the recompence itself (cf. ch. xxxv. 4).

According to...accordingly] The form of the comparative sentence is hardly grammatical. The compound preposition which introduces both protasis and apodosis has in the second case no noun to govern, and it cannot be treated either as a conjunction or as an adverb. We must either (with Dillmann) omit "accordingly" as dittography, or (with Duhm) change "he will repay" into a noun; rendering, "as the deserts so the retribution." The sentence, however, would read awkwardly without a verb.

to the islands he will repay recompence] The clause seems to identify the "adversaries" and "enemies" of Jehovah with the "islands" (cf. xli. 1), i.e. the heathen world; but that is almost certainly a misinterpretation of the sense of the passage. If there is any connexion with the earlier part of the discourse, the "adversaries" spoken of must be the apostate Jews,—those who by their sins hindered the coming of salvation. The prophet cannot mean that because Israel's sin has separated it from Jehovah, *therefore* judgement will descend on the heathen. Apart from this clause, indeed, there is nothing in the context to suggest the thought of a world-judgement, although of course the conception of a judgement beginning with Israel and extending to the nations is possible (see on ch. iii. 13). The words, however, are wanting in the LXX., and the verse would be greatly simplified by their removal. Their insertion is easily accounted for through a misunderstanding of v. 19.

19. The effect of the judgement, as a manifestation of Jehovah's glory, will be coextensive with humanity. The verse gives no hint that the judgement itself will be universal; the nations are affected by it only in so far as it reveals the character and deity of the God of Israel. Comp. ch. xviii. 3.

fear the name of the LORD] Cf. Ps. cii. 15.

When the enemy shall come in, &c.] R.V. reads: **for he shall come as a rushing stream** (marg. **a stream pent in**), **which the breath of the LORD driveth**. The rendering of A.V. is based on the Targ., Pesh., and Jewish commentators, and is followed by a few in recent times; that of R.V. has the authority of the LXX. (in part) and Vulg., and is adopted by nearly all the best modern authorities. The chief points of difference are (1) the construction of the word which A.V. translates by *enemy* (Heb. *ṣār*). According to the Massoretic pointing and accentua-

The spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

20 And the redeemer shall come to Zion,
And unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

■ As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD;

My spirit that *is* upon thee,

And my words which I have put in thy mouth,

Shall not depart out of thy mouth,

Nor out of the mouth of thy seed,

Nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD,

From henceforth and for ever.

tion it is the subject of the sentence, and may be rendered indifferently "adversary" or "adversity." On the other view it is an adjective qualifying "stream," and may mean either as an act. part. "rushing," or (less probably) "straitened," "pent up." (2) The verb for *lift up a standard* (R.V. "driveth," Heb. *nôšēš*). The A.V. understands it as a denominative from the common word for "standard" (see on ch. x. 18), while the R.V. derives it from the verb for "flee" (Pil'el = "drive forward"). The other differences need no elucidation. The second interpretation is alone suitable to the connexion, which "requires a continuous description of the theophany" (Cheyne). For the image in the last clause cf. ch. xxx. 28 ("His breath is as an overflowing stream").

20. The consequences for Israel.

And the redeemer shall come] Rather **And he shall come as a redeemer** (ch. xli. 14).

and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob] LXX. has "and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob,"—a different and more expressive text. So also in the quotation, Rom. xi. 26, where the words are applied in a Messianic sense.

21. Confirmation of the covenant to the true Israel. The verse, on account of its apparent want of connexion with what precedes, and its change of person and number, is regarded by some as an insertion.

My spirit that is upon thee] The change of pronouns (*with them... upon thee*) presents little difficulty here. It is caused by the transition from indirect to direct address; what follows being the substance of an oracle that was already gone forth. Comp. the similar promise in ch. xliv. 3. The person addressed is the spiritual Israel, which is even now endowed with the divine spirit and word. Whether Israel is conceived as "the bearer of the idea of the Servant of Jehovah" (Dillmann) is doubtful in view of the possible post-exilic origin of the prophecy. Against the view that the prophet himself is addressed, Dillmann pertinently remarks that the O.T. knows nothing of a hereditary transmission of the prophetic gift.

CH. LX. THE GLORY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

At length the dark clouds of sin and impending judgement roll away before the prophet's vision, and in three magnificent chapters (lx.—lxii.) he hails the rising sun of Jerusalem's prosperity. Ch. lx., a prophecy complete in itself, is a continuous apostrophe to the ideal Zion, describing her future splendour, the restoration of her children, the submission of the nations, the influx of costly tribute from all parts of the earth, &c. All the main features can be paralleled from ch. xl.—lv., and the strong resemblance to ch. xlix. 14 ff., li. 17 ff., liv. would naturally lead to its being assigned to the same author. Had the chapter occupied a different position doubt on this point would hardly arise; it would be accepted without difficulty as a prophecy of return from Exile, written in Babylon. But the fact that it follows a series of chapters which there are strong reasons to regard as post-exilic, raises the question whether it be a misplaced discourse of the second Isaiah, or whether it may not have been composed in the same circumstances as the gloomy oracles with which it is immediately connected. A closer examination of the passage reveals little that is decisive on either side, but apparently nothing inconsistent with the latter hypothesis. The promise of the return of the exiles (*vv.* 4, 9) obviously refers to the Jews dispersed throughout the world, whose ingathering remained an object of prophetic anticipation long after the restoration of the Jewish community in Palestine. Equally indeterminate are the allusions to the sanctuary in *vv.* 7, 13; it does not appear whether the Temple has yet to be rebuilt or only to be beautified. That the walls are still unbuilt (*v.* 10) only proves that the date is earlier than the governorship of Nehemiah. In the absence of definite indications, all that can safely be said is that the theory of post-exilic authorship is perfectly admissible, and is probably to be preferred in the interests of critical simplicity. The prophecy at all events loses none of its significance if it is regarded as a message of consolation to the depressed and misgoverned and poverty stricken community depicted in the foregoing chapters.

The poem, according to Duhm and Cheyne, consists of ten strophes. The order of ideas may be thus exhibited:—

i. *vv.* 1—3. An introductory strophe. While the rest of the world is shrouded in darkness, the light of Jehovah's glory breaks on Zion, and the nations are attracted to it.

ii. *vv.* 4—9. The main subject of the next three strophes is the return of the exiled children of Zion from East and West. As in ch. xlix. 22, they are represented as brought home by the nations among whom they have sojourned; the resources of the world are placed at their disposal, and they bring with them the wealth of distant countries as tribute to the God of Israel.

iii. *vv.* 10—16. The relation of the new Israel to the outer world (again three strophes). Zion becomes the mistress of the nations; her walls are built by strangers, and kings are her servants (*v.* 10); through her open gates a constant stream of treasure flows to beautify the sanctuary (*vv.* 11—13); she is the joy and praise of the whole earth, and is nourished by the "milk of the Gentiles" (*vv.* 14—16).

- 60 Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.
- 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And gross darkness the people:
But the LORD shall arise upon thee,
And his glory shall be seen upon thee.
- 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.
- 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see:
All they gather themselves together, they come to thee:
Thy sons shall come from far,
And thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side.

iv. vv. 17—22. The last three strophes describe the internal prosperity, both material and moral, of the future community. Peace and righteousness are the ruling powers within its borders; perfect order and security prevail (vv. 17 f.); instead of the natural luminaries of heaven, Jehovah Himself is its "everlasting light" (vv. 19 f.); the inhabitants are all righteous, possessing the land for ever, as the branch of the Lord's planting (vv. 21 f.).

1—3. The image in these strikingly beautiful verses is that of a city glittering in the first rays of the morning sun. Zion is no doubt addressed in the feminine gender, but the personification is much less complete than in ch. xlix. 18 ff., li. 17 ff., lii. 1 ff., liv. 1 ff. The name "Jerusalem" is inserted by the LXX., Targ. and Vulg., but the addition is unnecessary (cf. liv. 1).

1. *for thy light is come*] Cf. ch. lviii. 8, 10, lix. 9. It is the light of the promised salvation, so long looked for in vain. The perfect tenses are used from the ideal standpoint of the future.

2, 3. While Zion is thus illuminated by the presence of Jehovah the heathen world still lies in darkness. Jerusalem is the one point of light on the earth's surface, to which the nations and their kings are attracted.

For *people* read with R.V. *peoples*.

but the LORD &c.] Better: **but upon thee** (emphatic) **shall Jehovah arise**.

3. *And the Gentiles*] **And nations** (R.V.).

4, 5. In this and the two following strophes two things are closely associated: the restoration of Zion's banished children, and the influx of wealth from all parts of the world. The first half of v. 4 is repeated literally from ch. xlix. 18.

4. *shall be nursed at thy side*] Rather, **shall be nursed on the side**, i.e. carried on the hip, the Eastern mode of carrying young children. Cf. ch. lxvi. 12, xlix. 22. The idea, therefore, is the same as in ch. xlix. 22 f.; the nurses who bring back the children representing the heathen nations. See Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, p. 8 (abridged Ed.): 'Thou gavest me this bite upon my back, when I carried thee on my hip'.

Then thou shalt see, and flow *together*,
 And thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged;
 Because the abundance of the sea shall be converted
 unto thee,
 The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.
 The multitude of camels shall cover thee,
 The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
 All they from Sheba shall come:

5. *and flow together*] See ch. ii. 2. But the right translation is that of R.V. **and be lightened** (cf. Ps. xxxiv. 5). The two verbs are identical in form but belong to distinct roots.

thine heart shall fear] Lit., **shall throb**, obviously from joy, as in Jer. xxxiii. 9. These are perhaps the only two instances where the word is so used. Usually it means to tremble from fear.

and be enlarged] Ps. cxix. 32.

the abundance of the sea] "Abundance" is lit. "tumult"; it often means "multitude" (see ch. v. 13 f., xiii. 4, xxxiii. 3), but in late usage it acquires the sense of "wealth" (Eccl. v. 9; Ps. xxxvii. 16). The wealth of the sea is not the produce of the sea, but seaborne wealth, the wealth of maritime nations.

shall be converted unto thee] **shall be turned to thee** (R.V.). The stream of commerce shall be diverted from its old channels and flow to Zion.

the forces of the Gentiles] **the riches of nations**. Cf. Hag. ii. 7 (R.V. "the desirable things of all nations").

6, 7. The promise of v. 5 is expanded in two pictures, seen from Jerusalem's commanding position between the desert and the sea. The first is a procession of camels and flocks representing the tribute of the East.

6. *A multitude of camels*] Cf. Ezek. xxvi. 10; Job xxii. 11. The word for "multitude" is used of Jehu's small escort in 2 Ki. ix. 17. Perhaps "train of camels."

dromedaries] properly "young camels." The word does not occur in the O.T. elsewhere; amongst the Arabs it denotes, according to some of the native lexicographers, a camel less than nine years old (Lane's *Lexicon*).

Ephah] a Midianite tribe (Gen. xxv. 4). The Midianites are often mentioned in the O.T., although nearly always (except Hab. iii. 7) in connexion with the early history. In Gen. xxxvii. 28, 36 they appear as traders between the desert and Egypt (in another source—vv. 25, 28—they are called Ishmaelites); in Ex. ii. and xviii. we find them occupying the Sinaitic peninsula; in Num. xxii., xxv., xxxi. on the east of the Jordan; in Jud. vi.—viii. their hordes invade Palestine. Their proper territory is said to have been east of the Gulf of Akaba, where Ptolemy and the Arabian geographers mention a city of Madian.

all they from Sheba] i.e. (probably) **all those of Sheba**; although the Hebrew accentuation implies that the subject is the "dromedaries of

- They shall bring gold and incense;
 And they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.
 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee,
 The rams of Nebajoth shall minister unto thee:
 They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar,
 And I will glorify the house of my glory.
 8 Who *are* these *that* fly as a cloud,
 And as the doves to their windows?
 9 Surely the isles shall wait for me,
 And the ships of Tarshish first,

Midian"; hence R.V. "they all shall come from Sheba." The meaning would then be that the produce of Sheba was conveyed by Midianite caravans. *Sheba* (Gen. x. 7 &c.) is a people and country in Arabia Felix (Yemen).

gold and incense] See 1 Ki. x. 2; Ezek. xxvii. 22; Ps. lxxii. 15; Jer. vi. 20.

shew forth the praises of the LORD] Lit. "proclaim the glad tidings of" His praiseworthy deeds; cf. ch. lxiii. 7.

7. *Kedar* (see on ch. xxi. 16)...*Nebajoth*] Cf. Gen. xxv. 13 &c. The identification of the latter tribe with the Nabatæans of the classical writers is disputed by some eminent authorities, but it is at least a significant circumstance that "Nabataei et Cedrei" are bracketed together by Pliny, as Nabatai and Kidrai are associated in Assyrian inscriptions (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, on Gen. xxv. 13 f.). The Nabatæans were as powerful in the last three centuries B.C. as the Midianites appear to have been in the days of Moses and the Judges (see on ch. xxxiv. Intro. Note).

shall minister unto thee] serve thee for sacrificial victims. The verb has a liturgical sense (see ch. lvi. 6) and the somewhat peculiar expression is explained by the following clause.

I will glorify &c.] *my beautiful house I will beautify* (v. 13). It is difficult to say whether these words imply that the Temple was already in existence.

8, 9. From the East the prophet turns to the West, and describes the ships of the Mediterranean "like white doves upon the wing" converging on Jerusalem. These also bring from afar the exiled sons of Zion, as well as rich treasures from the nations.

8. *as doves to their windows*] Gen. viii. 9. The point of comparison is rather the swiftness of the flight, than the whiteness of the wings and sails.

9. *Surely the isles shall wait for me*] ch. xlii. 4, li. 5. Duhm proposes to read "For to me shall the seafarers be gathered" (substituting יָצִי [see on ch. xxiii. 13] for יָצֵא, and slightly changing the verb). Some such sense would better explain the word "first" in the following line.

To bring thy sons from far,
Their silver and their gold with them,
Unto the name of the LORD thy God,
And to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath
glorified thee.

And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, 10
And their kings shall minister unto thee:

For in my wrath I smote thee,
But in my favour have I had mercy on thee.
Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; 11

They shall not be shut day nor night;
That *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles,
And *that* their kings *may be* brought.

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee 12
shall perish;

Yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, 13

ships of Tarshish] See on ch. ii. 16.

glorified thee] *beautified thee* (as *v.* 7).

10 ff. The restoration of Zion's material prosperity through the labour and gifts of foreign peoples.

10. *the sons of strangers*] *strangers* (R.V.), as in ch. lvi. 3; although the reference here is not to individual proselytes, but to foreigners in general. It is not even certain that the verse implies a willing cooperation of heathen converted to the religion of Israel, although this is to be presumed. In either case the rebuilding of the walls by the heathen who had destroyed them is the sign of the complete removal of the divine anger against Israel.

for in my wrath &c.] Cf. ch. liv. 7, 8.

11. For *Therefore* read *And* (R.V. "also").

the riches of nations] as *v.* 5.

and that their kings may be brought] R.V. *and their kings led with them*;—a circumstantial clause. Some commentators would change the passive participle into an active: "their kings being the leaders." The alteration seems unnecessary.

12. Comp. Zech. xiv. 17, 18. The verse is objected to by Duhm and Cheyne on account of its prosaic character and unrhymical structure, and also because it violates the strophic arrangement which these writers find in the chapter. It certainly seems to intrude awkwardly between *v.* 11 and *v.* 13.

shall be utterly wasted] The verb applies strictly to the lands rather than to the peoples (see the notes on ch. xxxvii. 18).

13. Forest trees from Lebanon shall be brought for the adornment of the Temple. It is difficult to say whether the reference be to building materials for the sacred edifice, or to ornamental trees planted in the

- The fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together,
 To beautify the place of my sanctuary;
 And I will make the place of my feet glorious.
- 14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come
 bending unto thee;
 And all they that despised thee shall bow themselves
 down at the soles of thy feet;
 And they shall call thee, The city of the LORD,
 The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
- 15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated,
 So that no man went through *thee*,
 I will make thee an eternal excellency,
 A joy of many generations.
- 16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles,
 And shalt suck the breast of kings:
 And thou shalt know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour
 And thy redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

Temple-courts. The former view, though less poetic, is more probable; and it is certainly unfair to cite the proverbial expressions of *v.* 17 as an argument against it.

the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together] See ch. xli. 19.

the place of my sanctuary] is the Temple (Jer. xvii. 12), not the city of Jerusalem, as the place where the Temple is situated.

the place of my feet] Cf. Ezek. xliii. 7 ("the place of the soles of my feet").

14. The homage done to Zion by her former oppressors is probably to be regarded as the consequence of the new glory which accrues to the Sanctuary (*v.* 13).

The sons also...feet] The LXX. reads simply: "And there shall come crouching unto thee the sons of thine afflictors and despisers." The words omitted ("*all*" and "*shall bow...feet*") are probably a gloss.

The Zion of the Holy One of Israel] On the construction of the proper name followed by a genitive see Davidson, *Syntax*, § 24, R. 6.

15, 16. Instead of being shunned and hated by all nations, Zion shall become the joy of the whole earth, her wants being abundantly supplied from the best that the nations can bestow.

15. *Instead of thy being forsaken and hated*] Cf. ch. xlix. 14, 21, liv. 6, 11.

so that no man went through thee] with none passing by (or through).

16. For the figure in the first half of the verse, cf. ch. xlix. 23; the second half is repeated from xlix. 26.

17, 18. The inner order and security of the commonwealth shall correspond to its material splendour,—a double contrast to its present (or past) condition.

For brass I will bring gold, 17
 And for iron I will bring silver,
 And for wood brass,
 And for stones iron :
 I will also make thy officers peace,
 And thine exactors righteousness.
 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, 18
 Wasting nor destruction within thy borders ;
 But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,
 And thy gates Praise.
 The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; 19
 Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto
 thee :
 But the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
 And thy God thy glory.

17. *For brass...gold &c.*] Cf. ch. ix. 10; 1 Ki. x. 21, 27, and the opposite experience, 1 Ki. xiv. 26 f.

I will also make, &c.] Render: **and I will appoint Peace as thy government, and Righteousness as thy ruler.** The word for *officers* is an abstract noun (like "management" or "magistracy") used in a concrete sense; *exactors* is a plural of majesty, precisely as in ch. iii. 12. Its use here is an *oxymoron*; it denotes a tyrannous, arbitrary ruler (see on ch. liii. 7), the idea conveyed being that the tyranny of the present shall be replaced by the genial rule of Righteousness. In other words, Peace and Righteousness (personified qualities, as ch. lix. 14) shall be the governing powers in the new Jerusalem. The other rendering, "I will make thy governors peaceful" &c. (so virtually the LXX.) is grammatically possible, but yields a sense feeble and unsatisfying.

18. *wasting nor destruction*] ch. lix. 7, li. 19.

thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, &c.] This rendering is decidedly preferable to that of most recent commentators: "thou shalt call Salvation thy walls, &c." Moreover the *rule* in such cases (although v. 17 furnishes an exception) is that "the nearer obj. is usually def. and the more remote indef." (Davidson, *Syntax*, § 76). See also on ch. xxvi. 1.

19, 20. Comp. Rev. xxi. 23: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"; and xxii. 5. It is not implied that the sun and moon shall cease to exist; all that is said is that the new Jerusalem shall not be dependent on these natural luminaries. But that an actual physical illumination of the city by the glory of Jehovah is contemplated by the prophet can hardly be doubted. The basis of the conception is perhaps to be found in Ezek. xliii. 2.

19. *thy glory*] *thy beauty*; vv. 7, 9. 13.

- 20 Thy sun shall no more go down;
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself:
For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.
- 21 Thy people also *shall be* all righteous:
They shall inherit the land for ever,
The branch of my planting, the work of my hands,
that *I* may be glorified.
- 22 A little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation:
I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

20. *the days of thy mourning*] Cf. ch. lvii. 18, lxi. 2.

21, 22. The community, composed exclusively of righteous persons, shall possess the land for ever; and Jehovah shall be glorified in them.

inherit] Better: **possess**.

the branch of my planting] i.e. "which I have planted." Cf. ch. lxi. 3. The word for *branch* denotes strictly a "shoot"; so also in ch. xi. 1, xiv. 19. For the figure cf. ch. v. 7.

22. *A little one...a small one*] Better perhaps: **The least...the smallest**. The word for "thousand" (*'elep*h) means also a larger or smaller group of families,—**"clan"** or **tribe**. This is doubtless the sense in which it is employed here: comp. the parallel **"nation"** in the next line.

will hasten it in his time] The fulfilment shall be instantaneous when once the appointed time has arrived. The reference is to the whole of the preceding prophecy.

CH. LXI. THE PROCLAMATION OF GLAD TIDINGS TO ZION.

i. vv. 1—3. The speaker (see below) introduces himself as the herald of the coming salvation. Anointed with the spirit of the Lord, he is commissioned to cheer and comfort the distressed people of God by the announcement of a day of spiritual emancipation and privilege which issues in eternal splendour.

ii. vv. 4—9. In the end of v. 3 the soliloquy has passed insensibly into objective description of the glorious future of Israel; and this is the subject of the remainder of the prophecy. The old waste places shall be rebuilt (v. 4); Israel shall be recognised as the priestly people among the nations, while strangers feed its flocks and till its fields (vv. 5, 6); the people shall receive double compensation for their past sufferings, and the blessing of Jehovah shall visibly rest on them (vv. 7—9).

iii. vv. 10—11. The prophet, speaking as it would appear in the name of the community, exults in the glorious prospect thus disclosed of a spiritual spring-time when Jehovah shall cause righteousness and praise to sprout before all the nations.

It will be seen that in substance the passage deals with the same theme as ch. lx., the future blessedness of Zion. The important difference is

The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon me;

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the prominence given in the opening monologue (*vv.* 1—3) to the personality and mission of the speaker. The question necessarily arises, Who is this speaker? Whilst the Targum and perhaps a majority of well-known commentators assign the speech to the prophet himself, a number of the best authorities regard it as a self-delineation of the ideal Servant of Jehovah such as we have found in ch. xlix. 1—6 and l. 4—9. The question is one of much difficulty, and the chief points involved are the following: (1) The name "Servant of the Lord" does not here occur. But this really counts for nothing, since the same is true of ch. l. 4—9, where it cannot be doubted that it is the Servant who speaks. (2) It is said that the prophet invariably keeps his own personality in the background and that where any other than Jehovah speaks of Himself at length, it is always the Servant. This is true of the author of ch. xl.—lv., but is much less obvious if the present passage has to be assigned to a later writer. The prophet's consciousness of his own mission is strongly expressed in ch. lviii. 1, probably also in ch. lxii. 1, and it is unsafe to assert that he might not have expanded it in such terms as are here used. Another exception to the rule is found in the earlier part of the book in ch. xlviii. 16 (which may however be an interpolation. See on the verse). (3) There are undoubtedly affinities between the conception here and the portrait of the Servant; e.g. the gift of the spirit (xlii. 1), the helpful and consoling ministry (l. 4, xlii. 3), the message of emancipation (xlii. 7, xlix. 9). On the other hand the function claimed by the speaker cannot be said to transcend that of a prophet, and seems to fall below the level of the Servant's great work. He is only the herald of salvation, whereas the Servant is its mediator; there is nothing here to suggest the profound moral influence which is the characteristic of the Servant's ministry to Israel, for it does not appear that the mission of consolation here described consists in anything else than the proclamation of the coming glory. We miss also the element of universalism which is so conspicuous in the Servant's work; and the allusion to a "day of vengeance" strikes a note which is never found in the undoubted utterances of the Servant. (4) Although it is a begging of the question to assert that the personification of the Servant ceases with ch. liii., it is certainly difficult to find a place for this portrait in the cycle of Servant-passages. These passages shew a well-marked progression and connexion of thought, and one must hesitate to believe that after the climax in ch. liii. the same personage should again appear in what must be considered a subordinate character. On the whole the objections to taking the words as those of the prophet appear less cogent than those against attributing them to the Servant, but it is probable that the writer was familiar with the earlier portraits of the Servant and that his conception of his prophetic office was influenced by them. That our Lord quotes the passage as descriptive of Himself and His message (Luke iv. 18 f.) does not decide the question, for the ideal prophet is as truly a type of Christ as the Servant himself.

1—3. The prophet as Evangelist.

1. *The Spirit...upon me*] Cf. xlii. 1, xlviii. 16 (lix. 21).

- Because the LORD hath anointed me to preach
 good tidings unto the meek;
 He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the captives,
 And the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*;
 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
 And the day of vengeance of our God;
 To comfort all that mourn;
 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,
 To give unto them beauty for ashes,

because the LORD hath anointed me] The abiding possession of the spirit is the consequence of this consecrating act of Jehovah. "Anoint" is used, as often, in a metaphorical sense. The idea that prophets were actually anointed with oil is supported only by 1 Ki. xix. 16, and even there the sense may be metaphorical since (as Cheyne observes) we do not read that the act was performed.

to preach good tidings] The verb is *bassēr* (εὐαγγελισασθαι), on which see the notes to xl. 9 and lii. 7. It is to be remarked that in ch. xl. —lv. the *mēbassēr* (or *mēbassēreth*) is an ideal personage or company, whose function is quite distinct from that of the prophet or the Servant.

to bind up (i.e. heal) *the broken-hearted*] Cf. Ps. cxlvii. 3, xxxiv. 18, li. 17.

The terms "meek" and "broken-hearted" denote the *religious* qualities which characterise the recipients of the prophet's Evangel. How far the following designations, "captives," "bound," "mourners," are to be understood in a spiritual sense is doubtful. It is not unlikely that the immediate reference is to the social evils whose redress is already demanded in ch. lviii. 6, 9.

to proclaim liberty] a suggestive expression, shewing that the idea of the year of salvation is based on the institution of the Jubilee; see Lev. xxv. 10; and cf. Jer. xxxiv. 8, 15, 17; Ezek. xlvi. 17. These, indeed, are the only occurrences of the word for "liberty," which is thus seen to denote always a universal emancipation by public decree.

the opening of the prison] The rendering "opening of the eyes" (R.V. marg.) does not suit the context, though it is true that the word is generally used of the opening of eyes (once of ears). [In the Heb. read *pēqahqōah* as a single word, = "opening."]

2. *the acceptable year of the LORD*] Rather, a year of Jehovah's favour (ch. xlix. 8); and so in the next line, a day of our God's vengeance (cf. lxiii. 4, ch. xxxiv. 8). *vengeance*] i.e. on the oppressors of Israel, perhaps also on the sinful members of the nation (lix. 16 ff.).

to comfort all that mourn] Cf. ch. lvii. 18. The clause belongs properly to the next verse.

3. *them that mourn in Zion*] Lit. "the mourners of Zion," which may mean either "those that mourn for Zion" (as lxvi. 10) or those who mourn in her.

beauty for ashes] R.V. a garland (but it. "a turban") for ashes.

The oil of joy for mourning,
 The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
 That they might be called trees of righteousness,
 The planting of the LORD, that *he* might be glorified.
 And they shall build the old wastes, 4
 They shall raise up the former desolations,
 And they shall repair the waste cities,
 The desolations of many generations.
 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, 5
 And the sons of the alien *shall be* your plowmen and your
 vinedressers.
 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: 6
Men shall call you the Ministers of our God:
 Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,

Ashes sprinkled on the head were a sign of mourning (2 Sam. xiii. 19); these shall be replaced by the headdress which betokened dignity or festivity (see on v. 10). There is a paronomasia in the Hebrew which cannot be imitated in English; Germans render "Putz statt Schmutz."

oil of joy for mourning] (Omit the art.) As anointing with oil was a mark of joy or honour (Ps. xlv. 7, xxiii. 5; Luke vii. 46) so its omission was one of the tokens of mourning (2 Sam. xiv. 2).

the spirit of heaviness] a *failing spirit*; the same word as "dimly burning" in ch. xlii. 3.

that they might be called] Strictly: **and they shall be called.**

trees of righteousness] lit. "oaks" or "terebinths." The evergreen tree is a favourite emblem of the life of the righteous: Jer. xvii. 8; Ps. i. 3, xcii. 14.

the planting... glorified] see ch. lx. 21.

4. Comp. ch. xlix. 8, lviii. 12, lx. 10.

5, 6. Israel's priesthood among the nations, and the services rendered to it by the latter. The meaning of course is not that all Israelites shall minister in the Temple or that a separate sacerdotal order shall not exist (see on the contrary ch. lxvi. 21) but simply that in relation to the Gentiles, Israel shall enjoy a position of privilege analogous to the relation between priests and laymen. The fundamental idea of priesthood in the O.T. being the right of approach to God, this idea is conceived as realised in a system which may be likened to a series of concentric circles,—priests, Levites, ordinary Israelites, Gentiles,—each grade standing nearer to God than the next. It was Israel's calling to be a "kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6), and in the latter days this destiny will be fulfilled in their mediatorial relation to the outer world. Although prophecy in general accords a position of supremacy to Israelites in the future kingdom of God, the distinction is perhaps nowhere so definitely formulated as here.

5. *the sons of the alien*] Render with R.V. **aliens** (as ch. lvi. 3).

6. *the riches of the Gentiles*] **the wealth of nations**, as ch. lx. 5, 11.

- And in their glory shall you boast yourselves.
 7 For your shame *you shall have* double;
 And *for* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion:
 Therefore in their land they shall possess the double:
 Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
 8 For I the LORD love judgment,
 I hate robbery for burnt offering;
 And I will direct their work in truth,
 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
 9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles,
 And their offspring among the people:
 All that see them shall acknowledge them,
 That they *are* the seed *which* the LORD hath blessed.
 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 My soul shall be joyful in my God;

in their glory shall you boast yourselves] So the chief Ancient Versions. Another rendering is *to their glory shall ye succeed* (R.V. marg.); the exact idea being that Israel and the heathen shall "exchange places," the glory that now belongs to the latter being transferred to the former.

7. The first half of the verse is harsh in construction; and the text as it stands is corrupt. The general sense, however, is sufficiently established by the second half: the prosperity of the future shall be a twofold recompense for the miseries of the past and the present.

the double] in the same sense (*mutatis mutandis*) as ch. xl. 2.

everlasting joy] ch. xxxv. 10 (=li. 11).

8. Jehovah's righteousness demands this reversal of the present relations of Israel and the heathen.

I hate robbery &c.] Render with R.V. **I hate robbery with iniquity, and I will give them their recompense in truth** (i.e. faithfully). Instead of עֹלָה (=burnt-offering) we must point עֲוֹלָה (=iniquity). The translation of the A.V. would shut us up to a wrong interpretation of the prophet's thought. The robbery to which he refers is not that practised by Israelites on God (Mal. iii. 8, 9), but the iniquitous treatment of Israel by its foes.

an everlasting covenant] Cf. ch. lv. 3, lix. 21.

9. In virtue of this everlasting covenant the blessing of Jehovah descends on their offspring (cf. ch. lxx. 23), compelling the admiration of the world.

For *Gentiles...people* render with R.V., **nations...peoples**.

10. According to the Targum and some critics the speaker here is the Zion of the future; while Delitzsch and others, who assign the preceding words to the Servant of Jehovah, suppose that he is still the speaker. If the prophet is the speaker he transports himself to a future standpoint, and there is no reason why he should not at the same time become the

For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,

He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,

As a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments,

And as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,

11

And as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth;

So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth

Before all the nations.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,

62

And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,

mouthpiece of the redeemed community. Duhm and Cheyne agree in thinking that the verse stands out of its proper position and interrupts the connexion of *v. 9* with *v. 11*.

garments of salvation &c.] Cf. ch. lix. 17; Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16.

salvation and righteousness are, as often, synonymous.

as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments] R.V. "with a garland" (as *v. 3*). The last word denotes a headdress worn by priests (Ex. xxxix. 28; Ezek. xxiv. 17, xlv. 18), by fashionable ladies (ch. iii. 20), and (according to this passage) by a bridegroom. The verb for "decketh himself" means to officiate as a priest (Hos. iv. 6, &c.), and its use here, ("maketh his headdress priestly,") is so peculiar as to be suspicious.

and as a bride &c.] Better, **and like a bride that putteth on her jewels** (as Gen. xxiv. 53) or **her attire** (as Deut. xxii. 5).

11. *as the earth &c.*] i.e. as surely as the seed germinates in the earth, so surely will Jehovah bring to pass the great redemption here promised through the self-fulfilling power of His word. Cf. ch. lv. 10, xlii. 9, xliii. 19, lviii. 8.

CH. LXII. INTERCESSION FOR THE SALVATION OF ZION, WITH FURTHER PREDICTIONS OF HER GLORY.

Although the chapter is commonly treated as forming along with ch. lxi. a single discourse, it has a distinct character of its own, and is perhaps better regarded as the last member of the Trilogy commencing with ch. lx. There are three clearly marked sections:

i. *vv. 1—5*.—The prophet announces his purpose to labour unremittingly on behalf of Zion (*v. 1*), assured that the time is at hand when her righteousness shall be manifested to all the world, and a new name shall symbolize her new relation to Jehovah (*vv. 2, 3*). Instead of being forsaken and desolate she shall be reunited to her Husband and her children, and her God shall rejoice over her as a bridegroom over his bride (*vv. 4, 5*).

- Until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness,
 And the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.
- 2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness,
 And all kings thy glory:
 And thou shalt be called by a new name,
 Which the mouth of the LORD shall name.
- 3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the
 LORD,

ii. vv. 6—9.—Even now the prophet sees in vision the walls of the city crowned with faithful “watchers,” whose function is to remind Jehovah unceasingly of His promises to Jerusalem (vv. 6, 7). For the encouragement of the “remembrancers” these promises are supplemented by the oath of Jehovah, that strangers shall no longer be permitted to rob the community of the fruit of its labours (vv. 8, 9).

iii. vv. 10—12.—A last summons to “prepare the way of the people,” i.e. the returning exiles (v. 10). The proclamation has gone forth to the end of the world; Zion’s salvation draws near and her sentence of rejection is finally reversed (vv. 11, 12). This last section is almost wholly made up of reminiscences of earlier passages.

1. The speaker here is most naturally to be supposed the prophet, although the words are often explained as those of Jehovah Himself. This, however, is less probable, in spite of the fact that the verb for “hold my peace” is always in these chapters, except here and v. 6, used by or of Jehovah (ch. xlii. 14, lvii. 11, lxiv. 12, lxv. 6); for when Jehovah breaks His silence salvation has come. The thought of the verse is entirely appropriate on the lips of the prophet who wrote ch. lxi. 1 ff.; he declares that he will persevere in the course of action there described until the year of Jehovah’s favour has actually come.

until the righteousness...brightness] i.e. until her right, at present obscured, becomes brilliantly manifest (Ps. xxxvii. 6). Comp. ch. lx. 2, 3, lviii. 8.

a lamp that burneth] a burning torch.

2. *And the Gentiles &c.*] Rather, **And nations**. Cf. ch. lx. 3.

a new name] the symbol both of a new character and a new relation to God. Cf. Rev. ii. 17, iii. 12, ch. lxv. 15.

which the mouth of the LORD shall name] Rather, **shall determine** (as Gen. xxx. 28). This new name is a mystery (see Rev. ii. 17) yet to be disclosed, and is not to be brought into connexion with the names of v. 4 and v. 12.

3. *a crown of glory*] R.V. of **beauty**. There is probably an allusion to the mural crown which tutelary deities of cities are sometimes represented as wearing, on ancient coins &c. The prophet for some reason hesitates to adopt the heathen image in its completeness; and pictures Jehovah as holding the crown in His hand.

4, 5. The reunion of Zion with her Husband and her children. Cf. ch. xlix. 14 ff., liv. 1 ff., 4 ff.

And a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.
 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;
 Neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate:
 But thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah,
 And thy land Beulah:
 For the LORD delighteth in thee,
 And thy land shall be married.
 For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin,
 So shall thy sons marry thee:
 And *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,
 So shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Forsaken] Hebr. 'ăzûbâh; found as a proper name in 1 Ki. xxii. 42. Similarly *Hephzi-bah* (= "delight in her") is the actual name of the mother of Manasseh (2 Ki. xxi. 1).

Beulah] (bē'âlâh) i.e. "married," see ch. liv. 1.

5. *so shall thy sons marry thee*] The harshness of the conception is obvious; and it is hardly relieved by pointing to the double meaning of the verb *bâ'al* ("marry" and "possess"). Lowth and others, by a slight emendation of the text, read "so shall thy Builder (Jehovah) marry thee." (So Cheyne, who refers to Ps. cxlvii. 2: "Jehovah is the builder up of Jerusalem.") See on xlix. 17.

6, 7. Jehovah hears perpetually the voice of importunate intercession ascending for the ruined walls of Jerusalem. This is the thought poetically expressed in the two verses, but the details of the conception present several difficult questions. In the first place, Who are meant by the *watchmen*, or rather *watchers*? [The word differs from that used in lvi. 10, lii. 8 (= "lookers out") and means literally "keepers" or "guards" (Cant. iii. 3, v. 7; Ps. cxxvii. 1)]. (a) Some hold that it is here a name for the company of prophets, but this view has really little in its favour. The function ascribed to the watchers is not strictly prophetic, and the word is nowhere else used of a prophet except in ch. xxi. 11 f., where there is obviously a *comparison* of the prophet to a city watchman. (b) Another, but less probable, opinion is that pious Israelites are meant. (c) The best interpretation seems to be that of the Jewish exegetes, that the "watchers" are angelic beings, forming the invisible guard of the city. The representation, therefore, is purely ideal, and this fact has to be borne in mind in considering the second question, Who is the speaker in the first half of v. 6? The prophet could not strictly be said to appoint either angelic or prophetic watchers; hence the prevalent opinion is that Jehovah is the speaker. On the other hand it seems to some unnatural that Jehovah should appoint those who are to remind Himself of His own promises, and it is certainly the prophet who speaks in the latter part of the verse. It might be held that the language is not too bold for the prophet to use of himself in describing a scene which belongs to the region of the spiritual imagination, just as other prophets do things in vision which exceed human

- 6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
Which shall never hold their peace day nor night:
 Ye that make mention of the LORD,
- 7 Keep not silence, and give him no rest,
 Till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in
 the earth.
- 8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm
 of his strength,
 Surely I will no more give thy corn *to be* meat for thine
 enemies;
 And the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for
 the which thou hast laboured:
- 9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the
 LORD;
 And they that have brought it together shall drink it in
 the courts of my holiness.

authority (cf. Zech. xi. 7 ff.). Cheyne alone regards the three passages lxi. 1 ff., lxii. 1 ff., and 6 f., as soliloquies of the ideal Servant of Jehovah, or rather of that ideal as reflected in the mind of a later disciple of the second Isaiah.

6. *I have set...walls*] Another translation might be: "I have appointed guardians of thy walls." The verb for "set" means strictly "commission," and the thing put in commission is expressed by the prep. rendered "upon." On either view, the "walls" are the ruined walls of the actual city, rather than those of the ideal Zion of the future (cf. ch. xlix. 16).

ye that make mention of the LORD] Render with R.V. **ye that are the LORD'S remembrancers**. The words are to be joined with v. 7.

7. *Keep not silence*] Lit. "No silence to you!" The word *rest* in the next clause is the same as "silence."

8, 9. Jehovah has sworn that the Israelites shall no longer be spoiled by their enemies, but shall be secured in the peaceful enjoyment of the fruits of the ground. The phrase "no longer" seems to imply that at the time of writing the community was exposed to the depredations of its hostile neighbours. This would be an additional indication of post-exilic authorship, which is confirmed by the mention of the Temple courts in the end of v. 9.

8. *The LORD hath sworn by his right hand &c.*] i.e. so surely as He has the power to help. Cf. ch. xlv. 23, liv. 9.

the sons of the stranger] R.V. **strangers**.

thy wine] Lit. "new wine," must.

9. Cf. ch. lxxv. 21, 22.

in the courts of my holiness] Render, **in my holy courts**; not as R.V., "in the courts of my sanctuary." The allusion is to the festivals

Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way ¹⁰
of the people;

Cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones;

Lift up a standard for the people.

Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of ¹¹
the world,

Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation
cometh;

Behold, his reward *is* with him,

in the Temple, where the first-fruits were eaten with rejoicing before
Jehovah (Deut. xii. 17 f., xiv. 23 ff., xvi. 9—17).

10—12. Announcement of the return of the exiles. The passage
resembles ch. xlviii. 20 ff., lii. 11 f.; and at first sight it seems to imply
that no exodus from Babylon has as yet taken place. This indeed has
been the prevalent view of commentators, based on the assumption that
the writer is the same as in the two parallels. But the secondary
character of the passage, betrayed by the accumulated citations, is
somewhat adverse to this hypothesis, and it will be seen that the
language itself is susceptible of a different construction. It is certain
that a return of exiled Israelites is announced, but there is nothing to
exclude the supposition that (as in ch. lx. 4, 9) the return of those who
took advantage of the edict of Cyrus lies behind the prophet's stand-
point.

10. *Go through, go through the gates*] To whom are these words
addressed? The gates might be those of Babylon, in which case the
passage is the exact counterpart of ch. xlviii. 20 ("Go ye forth of
Babylon") and lii. 11 ("go ye out from thence"). It is possible, on
the other hand, that those addressed are the present inhabitants of
Jerusalem, who are invited to prepare for the final restoration of the
Dispersion. The gates must then be those of Jerusalem or of the
Temple (so Duhm).

prepare you the way of the people] In ch. xl. 3 a similar command is
addressed to angelic beings, and the "way" is that by which Jehovah
Himself is to return, at the head of His people. Here the persons
addressed must be the same as in the first clause of the verse; and
throughout this section the prophet appears studiously to avoid the
idea, so prominent in the earlier part of the book, of a triumphal march
of Jehovah in person through the desert to Jerusalem.

cast up the highway] ch. lvii. 14.

lift up an ensign for the peoples (R.V.)) Cf. ch. xlix. 22.

11. *Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world*]
Cf. ch. xlviii. 20. There redeemed Israel is enjoined to declare to all
the world the great salvation it has experienced; here Jehovah Himself
makes it known.

thy salvation cometh] Instead of "the Lord GOD shall come" in
ch. xl. 10.

Behold his reward is with him &c.] Repeated from xl. 10 (see on the

And his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD:

And thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

63 Who *is* this *that* cometh from Edom,

passage). The chief Ancient Versions seem to have felt the want of a personal antecedent to the pronouns; hence they render in the previous clause "thy Saviour" for "thy salvation."

12. Zion and its people shall then be recognised in their true character by all.

The holy people] The priesthood of humanity; ch. lxi. 6.

The redeemed of the LORD] ch. xxxv. 10 [li. 10]; cf. xlviii. 20.

Sought out] i.e. "much sought after." Cf. Jer. xxx. 17, "This is Zion whom no man seeketh after."

A city not forsaken] See v. 4.

CH. LXIII. 1—6. THE DAY OF VENGEANCE IN EDM.

These verses form a detached oracle, representing the final triumph of Jehovah over the enemies of His people. The image presented is one of the most impressive and awe-inspiring in the O.T., and it is difficult to say which is most to be admired, the dramatic vividness of the vision, or the reticence which conceals the actual work of slaughter and concentrates the attention on the Divine Hero as he emerges victorious from the conflict.—A solitary and majestic figure, in blood-red vesture, is seen approaching from the direction of Edom. A question of surprise escapes the prophet's lips as he contemplates the singular and startling apparition; and a brief reply comes from afar, indicating that the Hero is Jehovah, the Saviour-God of Israel (v. 1). The prophet then ventures to address himself directly to the advancing figure, inquiring the meaning of His crimson-stained raiment (v. 2). What follows (vv. 3—6) contains Jehovah's answer to the prophet's challenge, and the explanation of His strange appearance. The day of vengeance, the necessary preliminary to redemption, has come and passed (v. 4); the foes of Israel have been annihilated, as in some vast winepress (vv. 3, 6); and this great act of judgement has been accomplished by Jehovah alone, no human helper having been found to execute His will (v. 5).

It was a serious misapprehension of the spirit of the prophecy which led many of the Fathers to apply it to the passion and death of Christ. Although certain phrases, detached from their context, may suggest that interpretation to a Christian reader, there can be no doubt that the scene depicted is a "drama of Divine Vengeance" (G. A. Smith), into which the idea of propitiation does not enter. The solitary figure who

With dyed garments from Bozrah?
 This *that is* glorious in his apparel,
 Travelling in the greatness of his strength?
 I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

speaks in *vv.* 3 ff. is not the Servant of the Lord, or the Messiah, but Jehovah Himself (comp. the parallel ch. lix. 16); the blood which reddens His garments is expressly said to be that of His enemies; and the "winepress" is no emblem of the spiritual sufferings endured by our Lord, but of the "fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. xix. 15) towards the adversaries of His kingdom. While it is true that the judgement is the prelude to the redemption of Israel, the passage before us exhibits only the judicial aspect of the Divine dealings, and it is not permissible to soften the terrors of the picture by introducing soteriological conceptions which lie beyond its scope.

1. On *Bozrah*, a city of Edom, see on ch. xxxiv. 6.

with dyed garments] Better, **with bright coloured garments**. The word for "dyed" means literally "sharp," "piercing."

The mention of Edom as the scene of a judgement which is obviously universal (see *vv.* 3, 6), including all the enemies of Jehovah and Israel, is a feature common to this prophecy and that of ch. xxxiv. It is partly accounted for by the embittered relations between the two peoples, of which traces are found in post-exilic writings (see the note on ch. xxxiv.); and partly perhaps by the ancient conception that Jehovah marches from Edom to the succour of His people (Jud. v. 4). There can hardly be a reference to anticipated resistance on the part of the Edomites to the re-establishment of the Jewish State, for the judgement is not on Edom alone but on all nations; and moreover the prophecy in all probability belongs to a date subsequent to the first return of the exiles from Babylon.

glorious in his apparel] The word for *glorious* is lit. "swelling," being identical with that which is wrongly rendered "crooked" in ch. xlv. 2 (see the note). It is doubtful what is the exact sense of the expression "swelling in his raiment." Duhm's suggestion of loose robes inflated by the wind seems a little fanciful. On the other hand "glorious" or "splendid" (LXX. *ὡπαῖος*) conveys an impression hardly consistent with the image, since the garments of the divine champion are said to be "defiled" by the blood of His enemies (*v.* 3).

travelling] R.V. **marching**; Vulg. *gradiens*. This however may represent a variant reading (*ḥô'ēd*, cf. Jud. v. 4) which is perhaps preferable to the Massoretic text (*ḥô'eh*). The Hebr. word occurs in the difficult passage li. 14 with the sense of "crouching." Those who retain it here explain it in various ways with the help of the Arabic as a "gesture of proud self-consciousness" (Del.); "swaying to and fro"; "with head thrown back," &c.

I that speak in righteousness &c.] i.e. "speak righteously" (cf. xlv. 19). Jehovah declares Himself to be true in speech, faithfully fulfilling His prophecies, and powerful in deed (*mighty to save*).

- Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel,
And thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-
fat?
- 3 I have trodden the winepress alone;
And of the people *there was* none with me:
For I will tread them in mine anger,
And trample them in my fury;
And their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments,
And I will stain all my raiment.
- 4 For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart,
And the year of my redeemed is come.

2. The meaning of Jehovah's appearing is not yet explained, and so the dialogue proceeds.

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? Better, **Wherefore is there red on thine apparel**; the form of the question indicating that the red colour is not that of the vesture itself but is something adventitious. "Red" (*ʿādōm*) is suggested by *Edom*, just as the figure of the winepress may be suggested by the resemblance of *Boḡrāh* (v. 1) to *bāḡīr* (vintage). The figure, however, is in itself an appropriate one; the winepress appearing "as an emblem on the coins of Bostra during the Roman rule" (Cheyne, *Comm.*).

3 ff. Jehovah's answer, disclosing the reason of His appearing.

I have trodden the winepress] or **winetrough**. The word (*pûrāh*), from a root meaning to "foam," seems to be poetic, although the only other instance of its use is prosaic enough (Hag. ii. 16). For the image of the winepress cf. Lam. i. 15; Joel iii. 13.

and of the peoples (R.V.) *there was none* (**no man**) *with me*] See v. 5.

for I will tread them &c.] Render **and I trod them &c.** The substitution of past tenses for futures throughout the verse is imperatively demanded by the sense, although it requires a series of changes in the vowel-points (*Vav* consec. for simple *Vav*). The reason of the Massoretic punctuation was the desire to make it plain that the prophecy relates to the future. This of course is true; but though the event be in itself future, it is represented in the vision as past, from the standpoint of the Divine speaker. Otherwise, the verse would contain no answer to the question of v. 2.

their blood] R.V. *their lifeblood*; lit., "their juice." The word occurs only here and in v. 6. *shall be sprinkled*] **was sprinkled** (2 Ki. ix. 33; see on ch. lii. 15).

I will stain] Rather, **I have defiled**. (The form in the original is Aramaic.)

4. *the day of vengeance*] announced in ch. lxi. 2.

is in mine heart] i.e. in my purpose.

the year of my redeemed] Another rendering, preferred by many authorities, is **the year of my redemption**: the plural being taken as

And I looked, and *there was* none to help ; 5
 And I wondered that *there was* none to uphold :
 Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me ;
 And my fury, it upheld me.
 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, 6
 And make them drunk in my fury,
 And I will bring down their strength to the earth.

expressing the abstract idea, in accordance with a common Hebr. usage. The year of redemption is the same as the year of Jehovah's favour in ch. lxi. 2 ; it is the time of Israel's victory and salvation, a year that has no end.

5. Comp. ch. lix. 16. The verse explains why it is that Jehovah treads the winepress "*alone*" (v. 3). The expectation that some human helper would appear on the side of Jehovah is more remarkable here than in ch. lix. 16, where the judgement was on Israel itself, and the complaint might be that even within the chosen nation no champion of righteousness could be found. The idea that such a champion might have been found amongst heathen nations is of course much less easily explained ; unless, with Duhm, we suppose that the prophet is sadly contrasting his own age with the more hopeful time of the Second Isaiah, when the faith of Israel was directed to Cyrus as the agent of Jehovah's purposes on earth.

6. Repetition of the thought of v. 3.

And I will tread down the people] R.V. rightly, **And I trod down the peoples**, though the verb differs from either of those in v. 3. Past tenses are to be restored throughout.

make (made) them drunk] Some MSS., as well as the first printed edition of the Hebrew Bible (Soncino, 1488) read "broke them in pieces." The Targ. likewise supports this reading, which is more suitable to the context than that of the received text. The orthographic difference is minute (substitution of כ for כּ).

and I will...strength] R.V. **and I poured out their lifeblood**,—as in v. 3. The A.V. thinks of another noun, similar in form, but from a different root, meaning "glory" (cf. 1 Sam. xv. 29).

CH. LXIII. 7—LXIV. 12. A PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE RENEWAL OF JEHOVAH'S FORMER LOVINGKINDNESS.

(1) vv. 7—9. The prayer begins with thankful commemoration of Jehovah's goodness to the nation in the days of old (v. 7). The reference is to the time of Moses and Joshua, when Jehovah's loving confidence in His children had not yet been betrayed (v. 8), and when He continuously manifested Himself as their Saviour, bearing them safely through all dangers (v. 9).

(2) vv. 10—14. This ideal relation between Israel and its God has indeed long since been broken, through the rebellion and ingratitude of the people (v. 10). But in seasons of distress the better mind of the

nation dwells wistfully on those ancient wonders of grace, and longs that Jehovah may again put forth His strength and vindicate His glorious name (*vv.* 11—14).

(3) *vv.* 15, 16. From the past the writer turns to the gloomy present, beseeching Jehovah to take notice of and have compassion on the affliction of His people. For He alone, and not Abraham or Israel, is the Father of the nation, and its Redeemer from of old.

(4) *vv.* 17—19. From this point the increasing impetuosity of the language reveals for the first time the extremity of the Church's anguish. The prophet remonstrates with God for so withdrawing Himself from the people as to harden them in sin (*v.* 17) and cause them to be as if He had never ruled over them (*v.* 19).

(5) *lxiv.* 1—3. A passionate wish that Jehovah might now rend asunder the solid firmament, and melt the mountains, and make Himself known to the nation by terrible acts, surpassing the expectations of His people.

(6) *vv.* 4—7. In a more reflective strain the writer appears to seek for a reconciliation of Jehovah's attitude to Israel with His eternally righteous character. He, the only God known who meets the righteous man, is yet wroth with His people so that they fall into sin (*vv.* 4, 5). The lamentable consequences of this hiding of God's face on the religious condition of the people are described in *vv.* 6, 7.

(7) *vv.* 8—12. Final appeal to the Fatherhood of God, and His consideration for the work of His hands (*v.* 8). Let Him moderate His wrath and remember that we are His people (*v.* 9). For surely the punishment of sin has been sufficient,—the holy cities ruined, Jerusalem a desolation, the Temple burned with fire (*vv.* 10, 11). Can Jehovah look on these things and yet restrain His compassion (*v.* 12)?

The passage is one of the most instructive of O.T. prayers, and deserves careful study as an expression of the chastened and tremulous type of piety begotten in the sorrows of the Exile. Along with much that is of the permanent essence of prayer,—thanksgiving, confession of sin, and supplication,—it contains utterances which may cause surprise to a Christian reader, although they are paralleled in some of the Psalms, and in other portions of the literature. Very singular is the plea that the sinfulness of the people is due to the excessive and protracted anger of Jehovah, who “causes them to err from His ways” (*lxiii.* 17; cf. *lxiv.* 5, 7). This feeling appears to proceed from two sources; on the one hand the ancient idea that national calamity is the proof of Jehovah's anger, and on the other the lesson taught by all the prophets, that the sole cause of Jehovah's anger is the people's sins. The writer seems unable perfectly to harmonize these principles. He accepts the verdict of Providence on the sins of the nation, but he feels also a disproportion between the offence and the punishment, which neutralises all efforts after righteousness, unless Jehovah will relent from the fierceness of His wrath. The higher truth that the Divine chastisement aims at the purification of the people, and is therefore a mark of love, is not yet grasped, and for this reason the O.T. believers fall short of the liberty of the sons of God. Yet amid all these perplexities the faith of the Church holds fast to the truth of the Fatherhood of God,

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, *and* ⁷
the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us,
And the great goodness towards the house of Israel,
Which he hath bestowed on them according to his
mercies,
And according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
For he said, Surely they *are* my people, 8

and appeals to the love which must be in His heart, although it be not manifest in His providential dealings.

So far as the *ideas* of the passage are concerned, it might have been composed at any time from the Exile downwards. Nor are the historical allusions so clear as could be desired. From lxiii. 18, lxiv. 11 f. we learn that the Temple has been burned, and the land laid waste. It is natural to understand this of the destruction of the city and Temple by the Chaldeans in 586, and to conclude that the prayer was written during the Exile or at least before the rebuilding of the Temple in 520. In lxiii. 18 it is said that the Holy Land has been possessed "but a little while." If the prayer was written in exile this must refer to the whole period from Joshua to the Captivity, which is not an interpretation that commends itself at first sight. It would no doubt be more intelligible if written not long after the restoration under Zerubbabel (cf. Ezra ix. 8). But then we are confronted with the difficulty of the destruction of the Temple, for Duhm's explanation that the writer ignores the second Temple because of its inferiority to the first can hardly be regarded as satisfactory; and to assume (with Kuenen and others) a destruction of the Temple by the Samaritans (see Ryle's note on Neh. i. 3) is hazardous in face of the silence of history. Partly for these reasons, and partly because of affinities to ch. xxiv.—xxvii., and some Psalms which he assigns to the same period, Cheyne brings down the date of composition to the time of Artaxerxes Ochus (cf. Vol. I. of this commentary, p. 204). Apart from lxiii. 18, the hypothesis of exilic authorship presents no serious difficulty, for although the surrounding discourses are probably post-exilic, it is quite conceivable that an earlier writing might have been incorporated with them as sufficiently expressive of the mind of the nation at the later period.

7—9. Celebration of Jehovah's past mercies to Israel,—a frequent feature of O.T. prayers (Ps. lxxvii. 10—15, lxxviii. 1—4, lxxxix. 1 f., cv. 1 f., cvi. 2; Neh. ix. 5 ff., &c.).

7. *I will mention*] lit. "commemorate," but with the implied idea of praise, as 1 Chr. xvi. 4; Ps. xlv. 17, lxxi. 16; Isa. xxvi. 13, &c.
the praises of the LORD] the **praiseworthy deeds**, as ch. lx. 6.
and the great goodness] Cf. Ps. cxlv. 7, where the expression occurs.
according to his mercies &c.] Cf. Ps. li. 1,—one of several points of resemblance,—also Ps. cvi. 45.

8. The retrospect goes back to the beginning of the nation's history,

Children *that* will not lie:

So he was their Saviour.

- 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted,
 And the angel of his presence saved them:
 In his love and in his pity he redeemed them;
 And he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

when Jehovah's affection for His people was still unimpaired. Cf. Hos. xi. 1, "When Israel was a child then I loved him."

children (sons) that will not lie] Contrast ch. i. 2, xxx. 9.

so he was their Saviour] **and he became to them a saviour.** LXX. adds from the following verse: **in all their distress.** On metrical grounds the addition is an obvious improvement; and it leads to an interesting explanation of the first part of v. 9 (see below).

9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted*] (lit. "there was affliction to Him"). This is the sense of the *Qêrê*, which substitutes *lô* (to him) for the *lô'* (not) of the *Kêthîb* (see on ch. ix. 3). It is impossible to obtain a good sense from the consonantal text; and it is accordingly rejected in favour of the *Qêrê* by nearly all commentators. There is, however, no equally strong expression of Jehovah's sympathy with His people in the O.T.; both Jud. x. 16, and Ps. cvi. 44 fall far short of it. The LXX. (joining "in all their affliction" to the previous verse) continues: *οὐ πρέσβυς οὐδὲ ἄγγελος, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἔσωσεν αὐτούς*; i.e. **Not a messenger or an angel (but) His Presence saved them.** The only textual difference here is that מַלְאֲכִי ("messenger" or "ambassador") is read instead of צָרָה ("affliction"). It is true that מַלְאֲכִי is not elsewhere used of an angelic representative of Jehovah; but the metaphor is a natural one, and otherwise the translation has much to recommend it. (a) The "Presence" (lit. "Face") of Jehovah is used elsewhere of His self-manifestation. The fundamental passage is Ex. xxxiii. 14, 15: "My presence shall go... If thy presence go not, &c." But comp. also Deut. iv. 37; Lam. iv. 16, and see on ch. lix. 2. (b) An "angel of the Presence" on the other hand is a figure elsewhere unknown to the O.T.; the phrase would seem to be "a confusion of two forms of expression, incident to a midway stage of revelation" (Cheyne). (c) The "Face" of Jehovah, however, is not (as the LXX. inferred) just the same as Jehovah Himself in person. It is rather a name for His highest sensible manifestation, and hardly differs from what is in other places called the *Mal'ak Yahveh* (Angel of Jehovah). This is shewn by a comparison of Ex. xxxiii. 14 f., with xxiii. 20—23. The verse therefore means that it was no ordinary angelic messenger, but the supreme embodiment of Jehovah's presence that accompanied Israel in the early days. The idea has its analogies in Semitic heathenism, as when at Carthage the goddess Tanit was worshipped as the "Face of Baal," although this has been otherwise explained (Euting, *Punische Steine*, p. 8).

and he bare them] Better, **took them up**, as in ch. xl. 15. Cf. Deut. xxxii. 11.

But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit :
Therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* he
fought against them.
Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, *and* his
people, *saying*,
Where *is* he that brought them up out of the sea with the
shepherd of his flock?
Where *is* he that put his holy Spirit within him?

10—14. The rebellion of the people, by which Jehovah is made to be their enemy, and their vain regrets. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 15 ff.

10. *and vexed his holy Spirit*] Comp. Acts vii. 51; Eph. iv. 30. Except here and in v. 11 and Ps. li. 11 the predicate "holy" is never in the O.T. used of the spirit of Jehovah. It is perhaps impossible to determine the exact connotation of the word in this connexion. It cannot be accidental that in all three cases the holy spirit is a principle of religious life; hence the phrase hardly signifies so little as merely "His divine spirit"; as Jehovah's "holy arm" may mean no more than His divine arm. Nor is it likely that it describes the spirit as the influence that imparts to Israel the quality of holiness, i.e. separateness from other nations, and consecration to Jehovah. The idea rather is that the spirit is holy in the same sense as Jehovah Himself is holy,—a principle which is both pure and inviolable, which resents and draws back from the contact of human impurity and especially of wilful opposition. This spirit is a national endowment, residing in the community (see v. 11); it is the spirit of prophecy, resting on Moses, but manifesting its presence also through other organs of revelation (see Deut. xxxiv. 9; Num. xi. 25 ff.). Hence it is said to have led the people (v. 14), and to "vex" the spirit is to resist his guidance, by disobeying the divine word which he inspires. The use of this verb marks the highest degree of personification of the Spirit attained in the O.T., preparing the way for the N.T. doctrine concerning Him.

11. In adversity the people realised the privilege they had forfeited by their rebellion, and longed for a return of the days of Moses.

Then he (i.e. Israel) *remembered &c.*] Since the second half of the verse contains obviously words of the people, the subject of "remembered" must be Israel, not Jehovah. In the view of many commentators this subj. is expressed in the following phrase "his people" ("Then his people remembered the days of old"). But this order of words would be unnatural. The two expressions "Moses" and "his people" probably represent separate marginal glosses which have crept into the text, the first explanatory of "shepherd" and the second perhaps of "his flock." Neither is found in the LXX.

Where is he &c.] Or, *Where is He that brought up from the sea the shepherd of His flock* (i.e. Moses)? This reading is easier than that of the Massoretic text; it is supported by Hebr. MSS., and is followed by the LXX. The plural "shepherds" of R.V. represents the received Hebrew text; but the singular is the older and better reading.

- 12 That led *them* by the right hand of Moses *with* his glorious arm,
Dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?
- 13 That led them through the deep,
As a horse in the wilderness, *that* they should not stumble?
- 14 As a beast goeth down into the valley,
The Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest:
So didst thou lead thy people,
To make thyself a glorious name.
- 15 Look down from heaven, and behold

The plural was no doubt substituted in order to include Aaron (cf. Ps. lxxvii. 20).

This turning back of the people's mind to the wonders of the Exodus is a hopeful sign of penitence which Jeremiah did not discover in the men of his day: "neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt?" (Jer. ii. 6).

that put his holy Spirit within him] Rather, **within it**, i.e. His flock, the community; see on v. 10. Cf. Hag. ii. 5; Neh. ix. 20; Num. xi. 17, 25.

12. Render with R. V. **That caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses &c.**; accompanying him with its wonder-working power symbolized by the "rod of God" (Ex. xvii. 9). The reference in the latter part of the verse is not, as some have thought, to the bringing forth of water from the rock (ch. xlviii. 21; Ex. xvii. 1—7) but to the passage of the Red Sea.

13. *the deep*] R. V. **the depths**; Hebr. *têhômôth*, see on ch. li. 10. *as a horse in the wilderness*] treading as firmly and securely as the horse on the open pasture. Comp. the parallelism Ps. cvi. 9: "He led them through the depths as through a pasture-land."

14. **As the cattle that go down into the valley** (R. V.). It is doubtful whether this clause does not continue v. 13, adding a second image of the security with which Israel went down into the depths of the sea. It has certainly a more forcible sense in that connexion than if taken as an illustration of the words which follow. The only difficulty is that these words may seem too short to stand alone.

caused him to rest] i.e. brought him (the nation) to the resting-place, the Promised Land (Ex. xxxiii. 14; Deut. xii. 9; Josh. i. 13 &c.). The ancient versions read, less suitably, "led him."

so didst thou lead &c.] Summarising the previous description and concluding the retrospect.

15, 16. A piteous appeal to the Divine clemency, based on Israel's filial relation to Jehovah.

Look down from heaven, and behold] (Ps. lxxx. 14). By a natural

From the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory :
Where *is* thy zeal and thy strength,
The sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards
me? are they restrained?

Doubtless thou *art* our father,
Though Abraham be ignorant of us,
And Israel acknowledge us not :

16

Thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer ;
Thy name *is* from everlasting.

O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, 17
And hardened our heart from thy fear?

anthropomorphism the O.T. attributes the prevalence of evil on earth to a suspension of Jehovah's watchfulness; hence He is said to come down from heaven to enquire (Gen. xviii. 21), or, as here, to look down (cf. Ps. xiv. 2, cii. 19, &c.). To this writer it seems as if He had for the present withdrawn into His palace, and did not fully realise the sufferings of His people.

where is thy zeal (or jealousy)] Cf. ch. lix. 17. For *strength* read with R.V. **mighty acts**.

the sounding of thy bowels] i.e. the yearning of thy compassion. See ch. xvi. 11.

towards me? are they restrained] Rather, as R.V., **are restrained towards me** (LXX. "towards us"). Cf. ch. xlii. 14.

16. The verse reads: **For thou art our Father; for Abraham knoweth us not and Israel doth not recognise us; Thou Jehovah art our Father; our Redeemer from of old is Thy Name.** Jehovah is the Father of Israel, i.e. the Creator and founder of the nation (Deut. xxxii. 6; Mal. ii. 10; cf. Ex. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1; Isa. i. 2; Jer. iii. 4, 19; Mal. i. 6). The idea of the divine Fatherhood is not yet extended in the O.T. to the individual believer, although a remarkable anticipation of the N.T. doctrine is found in Ecclus. xxiii. 1, 4: "O Lord, Father and Master of my life,...O Lord, Father and God of my life." (Cheyne.)

17—19. Expostulation with Jehovah for the hard treatment which makes righteousness and true religion impossible to the nation.

17. Render: **Why shouldest Thou leave us to wander, O Jehovah, from Thy ways; and harden our heart so that we fear Thee not?** etc. Israel had rejected God's guidance, and He had given them up to their sins; how long was this to last? The idea underlying this plea seems to be that the people's faint aspirations Godward were checked and baffled by the continued evidence of Jehovah's displeasure. Some measure of outward success was needed to guide them into the path of obedience, and no such token was vouchsafed.

hardened our heart from thy fear] so that we cannot attain to the true fear of God, i.e. true religion or piety. "Harden" in the original is a strong word, recurring only in Job xxxix. 16.

Return for thy servants' sake,
The tribes of thine inheritance.

18 The people of thy holiness have possessed *it* but a little while:

Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

19 We are *thine*: thou never barest rule over them;
They were not called by thy name.

64 O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou
wouldest come down,
That the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

Return for thy servants' sake] Cf. Ps. xc. 13.

18. *The people...while*] The want of an acc. to the verb excites suspicion, for it is hardly possible to take "thy sanctuary" as the obj. common to the two clauses. A better sense is obtained, with few textual changes, if instead of *למצער ירשו עם*, we read *לְמָה צִעְרוּ רִשְׁעִים*: "Wherefore do the wicked despise Thy Holy Place." (See Marti's *Comm.*, and Gesenius-Buhl, *Lexicon*, s.v. *מצער*.)

The second part of the verse speaks of a desecration of the Temple, which apparently *followed* the possession of the land. The difficulty of reconciling these two facts has been pointed out in the Introductory Note above. If any destruction of the second Temple were known to have taken place about the time of Ezra, the circumstances would be explained. But the stronger statements in lxiv. 10, 11 make it unlikely that if such a calamity had really happened it should not have been expressly mentioned, even in the meagre historical records which have been preserved of that period.

19. Render: **We are become (as those) over whom from of old Thou hast not borne rule, over whom Thy name has not been called.** The visible splendours of Jehovah's kingship have been absent throughout the later period of the nation's history. Comp. ch. xxvi. 13, and (for the second part of the verse) Deut. xxviii. 10; Jer. xiv. 9.

lxiv. 1—3. The language of complaint again gives place (as in lxiii. 15) to impatient prayer for a Theophany,—an imposing manifestation of Jehovah in His might. It is the great "day of the Lord" towards which the desire of the people reaches forward. In the Hebr., ch. lxiv. begins with *v.* 2 of our version, *v.* 1 forming the conclusion of lxiii. 19.

1. *O that thou wouldest rend &c.*] Lit. "hadst rent." So "hadst come down," "had quaked." This use of the perf. in the expression of a real wish, whose realisation is contemplated, is unusual, and is only to be explained by the urgency of the speaker's feeling. Driver, *Tenses*, § 140. See on ch. xlviii. 18.

rend the heavens] Cf. ch. li. 6; Ps. xviii. 9, cxliv. 5.

might flow down] Rather, **might quake**; cf. Jud. v. 5. For the general conception of the Theophany cf. Ps. l. 1—6; IIab. iii. 3 ff.

As *when* the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil,
 To make thy name known to thine adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at thy presence.
 When thou didst terrible things *which* we looked not for,
 Thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.
 For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear,
 Neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee,
What he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

2. Render: **As fire kindleth brushwood, as fire maketh water boil, &c.**

to make thy name known to thine adversaries &c.—the purpose of the Theophany. Cf. ch. lix. 18, 19.

3. The second part of the verse, being (in the original) verbally repeated from v. 1, ought probably to be omitted as a copyist's error. The passage gains in compactness by its excision. *Vv.* 1—3 will then form a single sentence, the last clause of which runs: **while thou doest terrible things which we hoped not for**; i.e. surpassing all our expectations.

terrible things] A standing phrase, as Cheyne remarks, for the marvels of the Exodus, the type of the great final deliverance. Cf. Deut. x. 21; 2 Sam. vii. 23; Ps. cvi. 22.

4—7. This difficult passage contains (1) an appeal to that which distinguishes Jehovah from all other deities: He is the only God who works for them that wait for Him in the way of righteousness; (2) a confession of the people's sinful condition due to the persistency of the divine wrath. A contrast between these thoughts is probably intended; the severity of Jehovah's dealings with Israel seems at variance with His known character. But the text is in some places hopelessly corrupt, and the exact sense is somewhat uncertain.

For since the beginning...heard] Lit. "And from of old they have not heard." It is tempting (with Duhm) to take this as a relative clause parallel to and continuing v. 3 ("...terrible things which we hoped not for, and which from of old men have not heard"). There is an awkwardness, however, in commencing a new sentence with the next clause, and still greater difficulty in carrying on the sentence of v. 3 to the word "seen" (Hitzig). Accepting the traditional division, v. 4 will read nearly as in R.V., **And from of old men have not heard, have not perceived by the ear, no eye hath seen a God beside Thee, Who worketh for him that waiteth for Him.** The rendering of A.V. is partly accommodated to St Paul's language in 1 Cor. ii. 9, where, however, a different text (not the LXX.) seems to be followed. Jerome

- 5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,
Those that remember thee in thy ways:
 Behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned:
 In those is continuance, and we shall be saved.
- 6 But we are all as an unclean *thing*,
 And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;
 And we all do fade as a leaf;
 And our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.
- 7 And *there is* none that calleth upon thy name,
 That stirreth up himself to take hold of thee:

says that the Apostle's words are found in certain Apocalyptic books, although he will not admit that they are quoted from them.

"Worketh for" = "sheweth Himself active on behalf of"; without obj., as Gen. xxx. 30; Ps. xxxvii. 5.

5. *Thou meetest*] It is better (with Cheyne and others) to insert לו at the beginning, and render: "O that thou wouldest accept," &c.

that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness] i.e. **that joyfully worketh righteousness**. The words *rejoiceth and* are not in the LXX.

those that remember thee in thy ways] Cf. ch. xxvi. 8.

thou art wroth &c.] R.V. **thou wast wroth and we sinned**. Cf. ch. lvii. 17.

in those is continuance and we shall be saved] R.V. "in them have we been of long time, and shall we be saved?" The text is quite unintelligible. LXX. has simply διὰ τοῦτο ἐπλανήθημεν. The last word suggests a satisfactory emendation (perhaps ונפשע for ונושע). Of further conjectural restorations one may be mentioned, due to Lowth. Instead of בָּהֶם עוֹלָם he reads בְּהִמְעוּלָם = "against the evil-doers"; thus obtaining a parallelism with the preceding line.

"Behold Thou wast wroth and we sinned,

Against the evildoers, and we fell away."

This is at least a meaning, though not one that is altogether convincing.

6, 7. A pathetic description of the degeneracy and spiritual lethargy of the people, caused by the divine wrath.

6. **And we are all become as one unclean**— in a ceremonial sense, like the leper.

and all our righteousnesses &c.] our righteous deeds, —our best efforts after the fulfilment of the divine will, are stained and rendered ineffective by our general sinful condition.

as filthy rags] **as a polluted garment**.

our iniquities, like the wind, &c.] cf. ch. lvii. 13; Job xxvii. 21, xxx.

22. The image is here that of the leaf, already sere and faded, swept from the tree by the winter blast: so our iniquities hurry us away to destruction.

7. *And there is none that calleth, &c.*] an easily intelligible hyperbole. *stirreth himself up*] "arouseth himself," the same verb as in li. 17.

consumed us, because of our iniquities] lit. "melted us by the hand of

For thou hast hid thy face from us,
And hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.
But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; 8
We *are* the clay, and thou our potter;
And we all *are* the work of thine hand.
Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, 9
Neither remember iniquity for ever:
Behold, see, we beseech thee, we *are* all thy people.
Thy holy cities are a wilderness, 10
Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.
Our holy and our beautiful house, 11

our iniquities." Cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 10, "Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away in them, how should we then live?" A better reading, supported by LXX., Pesh. and Targ., is **delivered us into the hand** (i.e. the power) **of our iniquities**. Cf. Job viii. 4.

8—12. The prayer now ends in a direct and touching supplication, supported by various pleas, that Jehovah will at last cause His wrath against His people to cease.

8. *thou art our father*] See on lxiii. 16.

we are the clay, and thou our potter] The nearest parallel to this application of the common image of clay and potter is perhaps Job x. 9. It is the plea of the creature against seeming unreasonableness on the part of the Creator. Can the potter allow the work on which he has lavished his utmost skill and care to be broken in pieces?

9. *neither remember iniquity for ever*] Ps. lxxix. 8. The nation feels that it is bearing the inexhaustible penalty of past sins. Such a thought was specially natural after the Restoration, when it appeared as if even the immeasurable calamity of the Exile had not wiped out the arrears of hereditary guilt (cf. Zech. i. 12).

10, 11. The evidences of Jehovah's displeasure are to be seen on every hand, in the desolation and ruin of the sacred places.

10. *Thy holy cities*] is a phrase which does not occur elsewhere, and both LXX. and Vulg. substitute the sing. for the plur. It is not necessary, however, to follow them. If the land is holy (Zech. ii. 12) there is no reason why the epithet should not be applied to all its cities.

11. The reference must apparently be to the first Temple and its destruction by the Chaldeans. The expression, and indeed the whole tone of the passage, suggest an event not quite recent; it is not the present generation, but their fathers who praised God in the "holy and beautiful house." The question then comes to be whether this could have been said after the erection of Zerubbabel's Temple. In spite of the tendency to hyperbolical language which marks the prayer, and the painful contrast between the magnificence of the first Temple and the poverty of the second, it is difficult to think that the author should absolutely ignore the existence of the sanctuary if it had been restored. See Introductory note.

- Where our fathers praised thee,
Is burnt up with fire:
And all our pleasant things are laid waste.
12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these *things*, O LORD?
Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

is burned with fire] Lit. "has become a burning of fire"; cf. ch. ix. 5.
our pleasant things] Rather, **our desirable places**; cf. 2 Chr. xxxvi.
19; Lam. i. 10; Ezek. xxiv. 21, 25.
12. *refrain thyself*] See ch. lxiii. 15.

CH. LXV. THREATS AND PROMISES, ADDRESSED TO TWO DISTINCT PARTIES.

The chapter may be divided into two nearly equal portions:—

i. vv. 1—12. A contrast is drawn between the servants of Jehovah and a party who have apostatised from the true religion.

(1) vv. 1—7. The divine speaker complains that His gracious invitations have been scorned by an "obdurate people" (vv. 1, 2), who have provoked Him continually by scandalous and abominable superstitions (vv. 3—5), and against whom He now pronounces a final sentence of rejection (vv. 6, 7).

(2) vv. 8—10. The method of Jehovah's dealings with Israel illustrated by a figure from the vintage. As the grape cluster is spared for the sake of the new wine that is in it, so for the sake of the spiritual principle embodied in Israel, Jehovah will "not destroy the whole" (v. 8). On the contrary a seed shall be brought forth from Jacob to inherit the Holy Land from the west to the east (vv. 9, 10).

(3) vv. 11, 12. The schismatics, here directly addressed as they that "forsake the Lord" and repudiate the Temple worship in their service of strange gods, are threatened with extinction. The first section ends, as it began, by reminding the apostates of the overtures of Divine love and condescension which they had so wantonly spurned.

ii. vv. 13—25. The final separation of the two classes.

(1) vv. 13—16. The future of the idolaters is more explicitly contrasted with that of the "servants" of Jehovah (vv. 13 f.). The former shall be annihilated, leaving behind them nothing but a name for a formula of imprecation (v. 15); while Jehovah's true servants remain in the land to "bless themselves in the God of truth" (v. 16).

(2) vv. 17—25. The blessings reserved for the people of God in the Messianic age: an entire transformation of the conditions of human existence, compared to the creation of "new heavens and a new earth" (v. 17); Jehovah's delight in His handiwork dissipating the sorrows of earth (18, 19); patriarchal longevity (20); undisturbed possession of the land (21—23); immediate answer to prayer (24); and harmony in the animal world (25) are the features of this captivating picture of the latter days.

In the view of most expositors ch. lxv. is Jehovah's answer to the preceding intercession (lxiii. 7—lxiv. 12). But this connexion, as Cheyne

I am sought of *them that* asked not for me:
I am found of *them that* sought me not:

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has long insisted, is far from obvious and probably does violence to the natural interpretation of *vv.* 1, 2. The persons there referred to are sharply and explicitly distinguished from those in whose name the prayer is uttered. The community which in *lxiv.* 9 says, "We are *all* thy people" cannot surely have included amongst its members the openly pagan party described in *lxv.* 3 ff., 8 ff. And to suppose the meaning to be that Jehovah has always been ready to answer prayer, but must first effect a separation between the two classes, is very like an attempt to force a connexion where none exists. The theory becomes still more untenable when we take into account the extremely close resemblance between *ch.* *lxv.* and *lxvi.* It is safer to regard these two chapters as one continuous discourse, complete in itself, and having no special reference to what immediately precedes.

The situation presupposed by this chapter and the next presents many features of great interest and importance. On the whole the impression is confirmed that in this part of the book we have to do with prophecies delivered in Palestine, at a time subsequent to the Restoration. The notes will supply some indications of this; and there appears to be nothing which really countenances the idea that the author lived among the exiles in Babylon. The most important fact is the sharp division of parties, already referred to, which runs through the prophecy. This fact may be explained in two ways: (1) It may be merely the distinction, which always existed in Israel, between the godly kernel of the nation and the great mass who were addicted to heathen practices. The antithesis in this case would be largely ideal, being obvious from the point of view of the prophet and those who shared his faith, but not recognised by their opponents. But this conception hardly corresponds to the state of things revealed by the allusions of the prophecy. The separation is open and acknowledged on both sides; each party excommunicates the other (*lxvi.* 5); and the apostates maintain an attitude of opposition to the Temple at Jerusalem (*lxv.* 11). (2) The second theory may better enable us to comprehend this situation. It is the same as was already suggested by *ch.* *lviii.* 3 ff., viz., that the schismatics referred to are the half-caste Samaritans and their adherents amongst the "people of the land," while the servants of Jehovah are the religious and strictly legal party which is known to have existed in the time of Malachi, and had been reinforced by the arrival of Ezra and his company from Babylon (*Ezra ix.* 1—4). Some points in favour of this view are (a) the Hebrew extraction of the party denounced (*lxvi.* 5; see on *lviii.* 3); (b) their separation from the Temple service (*lxv.* 11); (c) the peculiar and revolting heathen rites to which they were addicted (*lxv.* 3—5, 11, *lxvi.* 3, 17) implying a degree of religious degeneracy not easy to conceive in a properly Jewish society; (d) their perpetuation of the illegal worship of the "high places" (*lxv.* 7); and (e) the manner in which they are addressed as a distinct and well-known body (*lxv.* 5, 11, *lxvi.* 5). These circumstances do not of course amount to a demonstration

- I said, Behold me, behold me,
 Unto a nation *that* was not called by my name.
 2 I have spread out mine hands all the day unto
 a rebellious people,
 Which walketh *in* a way *that was* not good, after their
 own thoughts;
 3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to
 my face;

of the hypothesis, although in conjunction with the presumption of post-exilic authorship they invest it with a certain degree of probability.

1, 2. Jehovah's overtures have been rejected by an obdurate people.

1. Render: I was to be enquired of by those that asked not,
 I was to be found by them that sought me not, etc.

The first verb in each line is of the form *Niphal*, which is to be understood not as a simple passive, but in its *tolerative* sense: "I let myself be enquired of," i.e. "I was ready to answer," exactly as Ezek. xiv. 3, xx. 3, 31, xxxvi. 37: "I let myself be found," as ch. lv. 6. Jehovah's readiness to hear is contrasted with the people's unwillingness to pray.

Behold me, behold me] Cf. ch. xl. 9, xli. 27, lii. 6, lviii. 9.

that was not called by my name] We should read, changing the vowels in accordance with the Old Versions: **that did not call on my name.**

2. *spread out mine hands*] The attitude of supplication; cf. Prov. i. 24.

a rebellious (refractory, Hos. iv. 16) people] LXX. has; λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα; and so the citation Rom. x. 21.

a way that was not good] "A not-good way" (litotes). The same phrase in Ps. xxxvi. 4; Prov. xvi. 29.

The people referred to here are necessarily the same as those described in the sequel. If these be the paganised Israelites in the land who had not shared the Captivity the two verses reveal an important fact not otherwise recorded. The prophetic representatives of Jehovah in the post-exilic community must, in that case, have sought to win over these outcasts to the pure worship of Jehovah, and the acceptance of the Law. This might appear to be inconsistent with what is told in Ezra iv. 1—3, where the friendly advances of the Samaritans are met with a stern refusal on the part of the Jews. But the contradiction is perhaps only apparent. The Jewish leaders might very well have declined the co-operation of these people while they maintained their impure religion, and at the same time been eager to incorporate them in the Theocracy on the terms offered to foreigners in ch. lvi. 6 f.

In Rom. x. 20, 21, St Paul quotes parts of these verses, applying v. 1 to the conversion of the Gentiles and v. 2 to the unbelief of Israel. Possibly this exegesis may have been traditional in the Apostle's time (Delitzsch), although the primary sense of the passage is that the same persons are referred to throughout.

3—5. Description of their illegal and superstitious cults.

That sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon
altars of brick;
Which remain among the graves,
And lodge in the monuments,
Which eat swine's flesh,
And broth of abominable *things is in* their vessels;
Which say, Stand by thyself,
Come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.

3. *that sacrificeth in the gardens*] Cf. ch. lxvi. 17, and see on i. 29.
burneth incense upon altars of brick] Strictly on the bricks (R.V.),
or tiles. We have no key to the meaning of the expression. Some
think the "tiles" denote the roofs of the houses, where sacrifices were
sometimes offered to false gods (see 2 Ki. xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 13; Zeph.
i. 5); others (like A.V.) suppose that altars made of bricks are referred
to. Why the custom should be specially Babylonian (Del.) does not
appear. The word for "burn incense" may mean simply "burn sacri-
fice"; see on ch. i. 13.

4. The first two lines read :

Who sit in the graves,

and pass the night in secret (lit. guarded) places.

The practice of "sitting in graves" is undoubtedly rooted in the worship
of ancestors (Schwally, *Das Leben nach dem Tode*, pp. 68, 71), and the
object probably was to obtain oracles from the dead. The phrase "pass
the night" seems to point to the custom known to the ancients as *incu-
bation*: "ubi stratis pellibus hostiarum *incubare* soliti erant, ut somniis
futura cognoscerent" (Jerome). This idea is expressed by the LXX.
(which runs the two clauses into one): κοιμῶνται διὰ ἐνύπνια; i.e. for the
purpose of obtaining dream-oracles. But whether the "secret places"
are connected with the "graves" is uncertain.

which eat swine's flesh] in sacrificial meals; in any case a violation of
the Law (Deut. xiv. 8; Lev. xi. 7). From the fact that wild pigs are
mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions (Jensen, *Zeitschrift für Assyrio-
logie*, Vol. I. pp. 306 ff.) it has been inferred that the Jews were tempted
into this during the Exile. But the swine was "forbidden food to all
the Semites," being sacred to more than one deity, and used in sacrifice
only in some exceptional rites (W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*²,
pp. 218, 290 f., 351). It is probably such mystic sacrifices that are
here referred to; and there was no place where lax Jews were more
likely to be enticed into them than in their own land.

broth of abominable things] Such creatures as are enumerated in lxvi.
17. The "sacrifices are boiled and yield a magical hell-broth" (W. R.
Smith, *Marriage and Kinship*, p. 310). "Broth" is the rendering of
the Qērê (mārāq, Jud. vi. 19 f.); the Kēthīb has a word (pārāq) which
might mean "piece" (sing.), although it does not occur elsewhere.

5. *Stand by thyself*] Lit. "Draw near to thyself." Cf. xlix. 20.
for I am holier than thou] This construction of the accus. suffix is
hardly admissible. The verb is to be pointed as *Piel*, and the clause

- These *are* a smoke in my nose,
 A fire that burneth all the day.
- 6 Behold, *it is* written before me :
 I will not keep silence, but will recompense,
 Even recompense into their bosom,

rendered : else I sanctify thee (cf. the similar use of the perf. in 1 Sam. ii. 16). The words express no Pharisaic sense of superior virtue; they are addressed by a Mystagogue (see on lxvi. 17), or at least a member of a special religious fellowship, to the uninitiated, warning them against the dangerous degree of holiness (taboo) which would be incurred by contact with the initiated (cf. Ezek. xlv. 19). (See *Rel. of Sem.*² pp. 343, 357—368). It is true we have no further evidence of the existence of such mystic societies in Palestine at any time. But the whole passage (vv. 3—5) is unique, and furnishes a startling revelation of a state of things without parallel in the O.T., although something similar may be inferred from Ezek. viii. 10. Its emergence at this particular period is no doubt to be explained by the collapse of the old national religions, which was the inevitable result of the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests. This naturally led to a recrudescence of primitive superstitions which had been handed down in obscure circles, but had been kept in check so long as the public religion of the state retained its vitality (*Rel. of Sem.*² pp. 357 f.). But while this general explanation may be sufficient, the situation becomes perhaps still more intelligible if we suppose the description to apply to descendants of the colonists settled by Assyrian kings in Samaria (Cheyne, *Introd.* p. 369).

these are a smoke in my nose] If the clause stood alone it would be interpreted as a figurative expression of the idea of v. 3 a,—a smoke entering into and irritating the nostrils. The parallel clause, however, has led nearly all commentators to understand the “smoke” as a symbol of the Divine anger (cf. Ps. xviii. 8); and to paraphrase the line thus: “these are (the cause of) a smoke (proceeding from) my nostrils.” This is certainly very unnatural. Why should not the second line be subordinate to the first,—the continually burning fire being the source of the “smoke” as the emblem of provocation?

a fire that burneth all the day] Probably a citation from Jer. xvii. 4; cf. Deut. xxxii. 22.

6, 7. Sentence is now pronounced on the reprobates, who by their persistent idolatries have served themselves heirs to the guilt of their fathers.

it is written before me] The sins mentioned above stand recorded in the heavenly books, calling constantly for punishment (cf. Jer. xvii. 1). Another interpretation, according to which the subject of the sentence is the Divine decree of judgement, is less acceptable, because the following words can hardly be taken as the contents of such a decree.

I will not keep silence until I have recompensed] For the construction cf. Gen. xxxii. 26; Lev. xxii. 6, &c.

even recompense &c.] and I will recompense into their bosom,—a

Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD,
Which have burnt incense upon the mountains,
And blasphemed me upon the hills:
Therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

Thus saith the LORD,
As the new wine is found in the cluster,

8

new sentence, as is shown by the Hebr. pointing of the verb as consec. perf. Cf. Jer. xxxii. 18; Ps. lxxix. 12.

7. *Your iniquities...your fathers*] The change from 3rd to 2nd pers. is extremely awkward, unless the verse could be detached from the preceding and regarded (down to "hills") as an exclamation. This is far from natural; the better construction is that of the E.V. which makes "iniquities" the obj. to "recompense." It is probably necessary (with the LXX.) to read "their" in both cases. The iniquities of the fathers are indicated in the following words.

which have burnt incense (have sacrificed,—see on i. 13) *upon the mountains*] The reference is obviously to the illegal worship of the "high places" or local sanctuaries, which is denounced in similar terms in Hos. iv. 13; Ezek. vi. 13; cf. Ezek. xviii. 6 (if the text be right,—see Davidson on the passage in *Camb. Bible for Schools*). That this form of idolatry was also practised by those here spoken of is in every way probable (see ch. lvii. 7); on the other hand their ancestors, the pre-exilic Israelites, could not be charged with the more heinous offences described in vv. 3—5. These last, however, were the outcome of the same idolatrous tendency which formerly shewed itself in the worship at the high places, and the judgement now about to descend on the children is called forth both by their own guilt and by that of their fathers.

therefore will I measure their former work] Rather: **and I will first measure their reward.** The word for "former" (*rî'shônâh*) if an adj., ought to have the art., and moreover the thought expressed by this translation would be unsuitable, since it passes by in silence the recompense due to the sins of the children themselves. It must therefore be rendered as an adverb, as in Jer. xvi. 18 ("and first I will recompense their iniquity" &c.). So R.V.

into their bosom] as v. 6.

8—10. In spite of the gross idolatries denounced in the preceding section there is that in Israel which makes it precious in the sight of Jehovah, and ensures for it a brilliant future.

8. In the figure, the grape-cluster represents the nation as a whole, including many unworthy members, the "new wine" (*tîrôsh*, "must") is the spiritual kernel of the nation, here called "my servants"; and the truth taught is that for the sake of the latter "the whole" shall not be annihilated in the judgement that is to come. It is an application to new circumstances of Isaiah's doctrine of the Remnant (ch. vi. 13).

- And *one* saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing *is* in it:
 So will I do for my servants' sakes,
 That *I* may not destroy them all.
- 9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob,
 And out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains:
 And mine elect shall inherit it,
 And my servants shall dwell there.
- 10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
 And the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie
 down in,
 For my people that have sought me.
- 11 But ye *are* they that forsake the LORD,

The words *Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it* have been thought, from their rhythm, to be the first line of one of the vintage songs often referred to in Scripture (cf. Jud. ix. 27; Isa. xvi. 10; Jer. xxv. 30, xlvi. 33, &c.). It has further been conjectured that the words "Destroy not" (*al tashhēth*) in the headings of four psalms (lvii., lviii., lix., lxxv.) refer to this song, naming its melody as the tune to which these Psalms were to be sung (W. R. Smith, *O. T. in Jewish Church*², p. 209).

that I may not &c.] (so as) **not to destroy the whole.**

9. When a separation is effected the true Israelites shall possess the land (ch. lvii. 13, lx. 21).

a seed] Cf. ch. vi. 13, liii. 10.

my mountains] the mountain land of Palestine, an Isaianic phrase (ch. xiv. 25). *shall inherit it]* i.e. the land.

shall dwell there] Dillmann infers from the adv. "there" that neither the prophet nor his hearers lived in Palestine; but the argument cannot be sustained. "There" may be said of a place just mentioned, irrespective of the speaker's relation to it. Thus in ch. xxxvii. 33 Isaiah says that the king of Assyria "shall not shoot an arrow *there*," referring to Jerusalem ("this city") where he was living.

10. *Sharon]* (in Hebr. always with the art.) the northern part of the Maritime Plain, from near Carmel to Joppa, varying in breadth from 6 to 12 miles. (For a description see G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geogr.* pp. 147 f.)

the valley of Achor] Josh. vii. 24, xv. 7; Hos. ii. 15. One of the valleys (not identified) running up into the mountains from the Jordan-depression somewhere near Jericho. The names are mentioned as the extreme limits, W. and E., of the land to be inherited by the servants of Jehovah.

for my people that have inquired of me] in contrast to those spoken of in v. 1.

11, 12. A renewed threat against the apostates, with a further allusion to their idolatry.

But ye are they that forsake &c.] Render: **But as for you that**

That forget my holy mountain,
 That prepare a table for *that* troop,
 And that furnish the drink offering unto *that* number.

forsake Jehovah (ch. i. 4) &c. The whole verse is a descriptive anticipation of the object of the verb "destine" in v. 12 (see R.V.).

that forget my holy mountain] The phrase may denote either simple indifference to the welfare of Zion (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 5), or deliberate abstention from the Temple ritual. The second view implies residence in Palestine at a time when the Temple services were in full operation; hence the other is necessarily adopted by all who hold the prophecy to have been written in Babylon. It is perhaps impossible to decide which is right, although those who recognise a Palestinian colouring throughout the chapter will naturally prefer the second as the more forcible interpretation, and find in it some confirmation of their theory.

that prepare a table &c.] Better: **that spread a table for Gad, and fill up mixed wine** (see ch. v. 22) **to Meni**. The rites described are the *lectisternia*, well known throughout the ancient world, in which a table was spread, furnished with meats and drinks as a meal for the gods (Liv. v. 13; Herodot. i. 183; Ep. of Jeremiah, vv. 27 f.; Bel and the Dragon, v. 11; cf. Jer. vii. 18, xix. 13, xlv. 17, 1 Cor. x. 21). A parallel in the O.T. religion is the Shewbread in the Temple (or Tabernacle), Ex. xxv. 30 &c. Gesenius remarks that the description of the complete *lectisternium* extends over both members of the parallelism, and infers that the two deities were worshipped together. This is probable, being in accordance with ancient custom (Liv. v. 13), but the laws of Hebrew parallelism hardly permit us to say that this must be the meaning.

That Gad and Meni are divine proper names is universally acknowledged, although neither has quite lost its appellative signification and both are here pointed with the article. Gad means "good fortune"; he is personified luck. [The rendering "troop" in A.V. is a mistake. Cf. Gen. xxx. 11, where "A troop cometh" should be "With fortune!" as R.V. marg. In Gen. xlix. 19, where a different etymology is supposed, the word for "troop" is not *gad* but *gēdūd*.] The existence of a Syrian god of this name (or the Greek equivalent Τύχη) is well established, and his worship is proved to have extended over a very wide area (see Baethgen, *Beiträge zur Sem. Rel.-Gesch.* pp. 76—80). It appears that the evidence is most copious amongst the Greek inscriptions of the Hauran (note the proximity to the Hebrew tribe of Gad) where there must have been numerous temples in his honour. But the name occurs also in Phœnician and Palmyrene inscriptions, and on coins of several cities, including Ashkelon, while a temple to the "Fortune" of Gaza is known to have existed in that city (Baethgen, p. 66). The place-names Baal-Gad (at the foot of Hermon, Josh. xi. 17, xii. 7, xiii. 5) and Migdal-Gad (in Judah, Josh. xv. 37) seem to shew that his worship was practised in Palestine proper. There are besides frequent references in Syriac and later Jewish literature; a Syriac writer of the 5th century mentions that *lectisternia* were still prepared for Gad in his time. The

- 12 Therefore will I number you to the sword,
And ye shall all bow down to the slaughter:
Because when I called, ye did not answer;
When I spake, ye did not hear;
But did evil before mine eyes,
And did choose *that* wherein I delighted not.
- 13 Therefore thus saith the Lord God,
Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry:
Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty:
Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be
ashamed:
- 14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart,
But ye shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And shall howl for vexation of spirit.
- 15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my
chosen:

Jewish interpreters identified Gad with the planet Jupiter, called by the Arabs "the greater Luck," but this association may be more recent than our passage (Baethgen). Meni (*Mēnī*) has left fewer traces. He is possibly identical with the goddess *Manāt*, one of the three chief divinities of the pre-Mohammedan Arabs (Koran, Sura liii. 19—23). A personal name '*Abdmenī*' (=Servant of Meni?) has been found on coins of the Achæmenidæ, but the accuracy of this is doubted by some (Delitzsch, Schrader in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*). The meaning of the word is "Destiny," and the god has been identified with the planet Venus, "the lesser Luck" of the Arabs. It is quite as likely, however, that Meni is the antithesis of Gad,—the god of *evil* destiny. [Observe that in the LXX. Gad is *Δαίμωνιον* and Meni *Τύχη*.] Nothing has yet been discovered to connect these deities with the Babylonian pantheon. Some think they may be Hebrew equivalents of Babylonian names (Dillmann), others that their worship was transported from Syria to Babylon (Baethgen). These are speculations, but the actual evidence points to Western Asia as the natural environment of this cult.

12. Render with R.V. **I will destine you to the sword** &c. There is a play upon words between the verb for "destine" (*mānāh*) and *Mēnī* in v. 11.

because when I called &c.] Cf. vv. 1, 2.

but did evil before mine eyes &c.] Exactly as ch. lxvi. 4.

13—16. Contrast between the fate of these idolaters and that of Jehovah's servants.

14. *joy of heart*] Cf. Deut. xxviii. 47.

vexation of spirit] lit. **breaking** of spirit; contrast the different sense of "broken of heart" (ch. lxi. 1).

15. Their names shall be used in a formula of imprecation. Comp. in illustration Jer. xxix. 22: "And from them shall be taken a curse for

For the Lord GOD shall slay thee,
 And call his servants by another name :
 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless ¹⁵
 himself in the God of truth ;
 And he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the
 God of truth ;
 Because the former troubles are forgotten,
 And because they are hid from mine eyes.

all the captivity of Judah...saying, 'Jehovah make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire !'." Have we such a formula quoted in the clause following, "and the Lord Jehovah shall slay thee"? It is objected (1) that the formula would be incomplete, the essential words—"like so-and-so"—being omitted ; (2) the "and" is unaccounted for, while to remove it would leave a perf. with a precativ sense, a usage which is very doubtful in Hebr. (Driver, *Tenses*, § 20). On the other hand, the use of 2nd pers. sing. rather favours the view that the words are meant as a specimen of the curse.

and call his servants by another name] The LXX. (Cod. Vat.), with slight modifications of the text, reads : "And on my servants shall be called a new name" (τοῖς δὲ δουλεύουσι μοι κληθήσεται ὄνομα καινόν). The *καινόν* is no doubt a slip ; but the change of "his" to "my" is an obvious improvement, and may safely be adopted. The promise must not be taken too literally, nor too closely connected with the preceding threat. It is hardly conceivable that the prophet contemplates the abrogation of the name "Israel," because it has been degraded by unworthy Israelites (Cheyne, *Comm.*). This would be implied only if the name "Israel" were that which is to remain for a curse, which is again a too violent interpretation. The "other name" is contrasted, not with that which both parties had borne in common, but with names such as "Forsaken," which describe the present condition of the true believers. Cf. ch. lxii. 2, 4, 12.

16. *That]* R.V., *So that* (as Gen. xi. 7 ; Ps. xcv. 11 ; Mal. iv. 1, &c.).

he who blesseth himself in the land] i.e. "who invokes a blessing on himself"; cf. Gen. xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, xlviii. 20 ; Jer. iv. 2.

shall bless himself by the God of truth] using such expressions as, "May the God of truth bless me." By the fulfilment both of His threatenings and His promises Jehovah will have shewn Himself to be the God of truth, so that a blessing uttered in His name is certainly effective. *God of truth* is strictly "God of the Amen" (cf. 2 Cor. i. 20 ; Rev. iii. 14), but this is a too artificial phrase for so early a period. Read *ōmen* (= "truth," "fidelity").

swear by the God of truth] Cf. ch. xlviii. 1.

the former troubles are forgotten] See Rev. xxi. 4.
mine eyes] a reminiscence probably of Hos. xiii. 14.

hid from

- 17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:
And the former shall not be remembered, nor come
into mind.
- 18 But be you glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I
create:
For behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her
people a joy.
- 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people:
And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in
her, nor the voice of crying.
- 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days,

17—25. The last sentence of v. 16 inspires the loftiest flight of the prophet's imagination. The "former troubles shall be forgotten" in the glories of a new creation, in which all things minister to the welfare of Jehovah's regenerate people.

17. *new heavens and a new earth*] i.e. a new universe, Hebrew having no single word for the Cosmos (cf. ch. lxvi. 22; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1). The phrase sums up a whole aspect of the prophetic theology. The idea of a transformation of nature so as to be in harmony with a renewed humanity has met us several times in the earlier part of the book (ch. xi. 6—9, xxix. 17, xxx. 23 ff., xxxii. 15, xxxv., &c.), and is a frequent theme of prophecy, but the thought of a new creation is nowhere expressed so absolutely as here. It may have been suggested to the prophet by ch. li. 6, where it is said that the present universe shall be dissolved, although it is doubtful if that verse contains more than a metaphorical expression of the transitoriness of the material in contrast with the spiritual. Here there can be no doubt that the words are to be interpreted literally. At the same time the new creation preserves as it were the form of the old, for the next verse shews that a new Jerusalem is the centre of the renovated earth.

the former] R.V. *the former things*. The reference may be specifically to the "former troubles" of v. 16, or generally to the old state of things which shall have vanished for ever.

nor come into mind] Lit. "come up on the heart," as Jer. iii. 16, vii. 31, &c. The phrase is characteristic of the book of Jeremiah.

18. *I create Jerusalem a rejoicing &c.*] i.e. either an object in which one may rejoice (v. 19, ch. lx. 15) or an abode of joy (ch. li. 3, lxi. 7).

19. God Himself rejoices in the new city and people; cf. lxii. 5.
and the voice of weeping &c.] Cf. ch. xxv. 8, xxxv. 10.

20. Amongst the blessings of the new people of God the chief shall be a miraculous extension of the term of human life. This is the dominant idea down to the end of v. 22. The expression of the thought is unaccountably laboured and obscure.

an infant of days] must mean one who lives only a few days.

Nor an old man that hath not filled his days :
For the child shall die an hundred years old ;
But the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be
accursed.

And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them* ; 21
And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of
them.

They shall not build, and another inhabit ; 22
They shall not plant, and another eat :

For as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people,
And mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their
hands.

They shall not labour in vain, 23
Nor bring forth for trouble ;

nor an old man...days] (cf. Gen. xxv. 8 ; Ex. xxiii. 26 ; Job v. 26),
i.e. none shall become prematurely old ; each shall attain the allotted
measure of life according to the standard which shall then be normal.

for the youth shall die an hundred years old] Death at the age of 100
(if such a thing took place) would be looked on as an untimely death in
extreme youth, and a special mark of the Divine anger on a career of
wickedness (Job xv. 32, xx. 5).

but the sinner &c.] Or: **And he that falls short of 100 years shall
be accursed**,—omitting the word *bēn* in the Heb. and taking *hōlē* in its
primary sense of missing a mark. (Buhl.)

It is evident that the idea of immortal life is unknown to the writer.
He looks forward to a restriction of the power of death, but not to its
entire cessation. The same idea is probably implied in a prophecy of
the early post-exilic period (Zech. viii. 4 ; see on ch. xxv. 8) ; and a
conception precisely similar is characteristic of the first section of the
Book of Enoch. See Charles, *Book of Enoch*, pp. 26, 55, 98. Comp.
En. v. 9 : "And [the elect] will not be punished all the days of their
life, nor will they die of plagues or visitations of wrath, but they will
complete the full number of the days of their life, and their lives will
grow old in peace, and the years of their joy will be many, in eternal
happiness and peace all the days of their life." Cf. also x. 17 and
xxv. 4, 5.

21, 22. In consequence of this extension of the term of life, each man
shall enjoy the fruit of his own labour (cf. Deut. xxviii. 30). The idea
is therefore somewhat different from that of ch. lxii. 8, 9.

as the days of a tree] Cf. Ps. xcii. 12, 13.

mine elect (= my chosen, v. 15) shall long enjoy &c.] lit. "shall wear
out," "use up" (Job xxi. 13).

23. *They shall not weary themselves for vanity*] ch. xlix. 4 ;
IIab. ii. 13 ; because God's blessing rests on them.

nor bring forth (sc. children) for sudden destruction] Jer. xv. 8 ;
Ps. lxxviii. 33.

For they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will
answer ;

And whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the bullock :
And dust *shall be* the serpent's meat.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy moun-
tain, saith the LORD.

and their offspring with them] Better perhaps as a complete sentence:
and their offspring shall be with them (R.V. marg.); many generations
living together. Cf. Job xxi. 8.

24. Cf. Dan. ix. 21.

25. A last feature of the new earth is the peace which shall reign in
the animal world. See on ch. xi. 6—9, from which this verse is quoted.
The second and fourth lines are cited literally from xi. 7, 9, the first is
a condensation of xi. 6, 7 a. The only clause not represented in the
original passage is the third line: *and dust shall be the serpent's meat*, an
allusion to Gen. iii. 14. Duhm, partly on metrical grounds, rejects
these words as a gloss.

CH. LXVI. THE ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUE ISRAEL; THE DOOM OF THE APOSTATES.

This chapter continues the antithesis that runs through ch. lxxv.,
carrying it onward to its eschatological issues. The connexion of ideas
is frequently extremely difficult to trace, and no two critics are agreed as
to where the different sections begin and end. The contents of the
passage, however, may be exhibited as follows:

i. vv. 1—4. The chapter begins with a remarkable declaration
against a formal and unspiritual ceremonial. Addressing those who
contemplate the erection of a Temple in His honour, Jehovah points
out how inadequate any earthly house must necessarily be to His
majesty, and reminds them that the only worship acceptable in His
sight is that which proceeds from a humble, contrite and reverent spirit
(vv. 1, 2). How little this condition is fulfilled by those referred to is
shewn by a rapid survey of the superstitious practices which, in direct
defiance of the Divine Law, they seek to combine with the service of
Jehovah (v. 3). Sentence is pronounced against them on account of
their disobedience (v. 4).

ii. vv. 5—9. Turning from these, Jehovah speaks to those who
comply with the requirement of v. 2, assuring them of a speedy triumph
over their insolent persecutors, and announcing, under the figure of
a new birth, a sudden and marvellous increase of the population
of Zion.

Thus saith the LORD,

The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool:

Where *is* the house that ye build unto me?

And where *is* the place of my rest?

For all those *things* hath mine hand made,

And all those *things* have been, saith the LORD:

But to this *man* will I look,

Even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit,

iii. vv. 10—14. Peace and joy shall reign in the new Jerusalem, and those who sympathise with and mourn for her present distress are invited to share in her future consolation.

iv. vv. 15—17. A renewed description of the judgement (expanding the thought of v. 6). The judgement is universal ("with all flesh"), but special emphasis is laid on the fate of the apostates so often appearing in the last two chapters (v. 17).

v. vv. 18—22. The judgement is followed by a manifestation of Jehovah's glory to all nations (v. 18). The survivors of the nearer nations, who have witnessed the catastrophe, shall be sent as messengers to the more distant countries (v. 19); these shall then voluntarily bring back to Zion the dispersed Israelites (v. 20); and from amongst them (the restored exiles or the converted heathen?) some shall be chosen as ministers of the sanctuary (v. 21). Israel, thus reconstituted, shall be as enduring as the new heavens and earth which Jehovah is about to create (v. 22).

vi. vv. 23, 24. The universality of the true religion, expressed inadequately in terms of the old dispensation as a monthly and weekly pilgrimage of all nations to the sanctuary at Jerusalem (v. 23); with a closing reference to the appalling fate reserved for the impenitent rebels against Jehovah (v. 24).

1, 2. Jehovah, who fills and has created heaven and earth, "dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Comp. the citation in Acts vii. 48 ff., also 1 Ki. viii. 27; Jer. xxiii. 24.

The heaven is my throne] Ps. xi. 4, ciii. 19.

the earth is my footstool] Hence the Temple itself (or the ark) is spoken of as Jehovah's footstool; Lam. ii. 1; Ps. xcix. 5, cxxii. 7; 1 Chr. xxviii. 2.

where is the house &c.] Render: **what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what manner of place is my resting place** (Ps. cxxii. 8, 14)?

2. *all these things*] i.e. the heavens and the earth, the whole visible creation. That the phrase refers to the Jewish community with its religious institutions (Duhm) is a thoroughly unnatural supposition. For *have been read have come into being*.

but to this man will I look (have regard) &c.] Cf. ch. lvii. 15.

contrite is lit. "smitten"; it is the same word which is rendered

And trembleth at my word.

“broken” or “wounded” (of the spirit) in Prov. xv. 13, xvii. 22, xviii. 14. In all the other passages where “contrite” is found in the E.V. (ch. lvii. 15; Ps. xxxiv. 18, li. 17) it represents a formation from another root, meaning “to be crushed.”

trembleth at my word] Cf. v. 5; Ezra ix. 4, x. 3.

These two verses contain one of the most explicit declarations of the spirituality of religion to be found in the O.T., anticipating the principle enunciated by our Lord in John iv. 24. It is not surprising that commentators have differed widely as to their precise significance in their present connexion. (1) The opinion of a few writers, that the prophet enters a protest against the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem and desiderates a pure spiritual worship without sanctuary or sacrifice, is quite untenable. It is certain that no conception that would lead to a disparaging estimate of the Temple and its services can be attributed either to the second Isaiah or to any of his successors. (See to the contrary, ch. xlv. 28, lvi. 5, 7, lx. 7, lxvi. 6, 20 f. &c.) The idea suggested lies entirely beyond the most spiritual writers in the O.T.; and in the passages most nearly akin to this (e.g. Ps. xl. 6, l. 8—15, li. 16 f.) there is no suggestion that a material sanctuary and ritual could be dispensed with. (2) Hitzig and some others have supposed a reference to a project entertained by some of the exiles to erect a Temple of Jehovah in Babylonia. Not only, however, is the assumption absolutely destitute of historical evidence, but it is almost incredible that such an intention should have entered the thoughts of any Jews in exile. (3) If the passage was written in the near prospect of a return to Palestine, there is but one explanation which is at all plausible. The prophet is thinking of the *character* of the mass of the people who are eagerly looking forward to the restoration of the national worship; and he warns them that Jehovah *needs* no temple, and that their whole service of Him will be vitiated by the want of a right religious disposition. In other words, the polemic is directed not against the existence of the Temple in itself, but against the building of it being undertaken by such men as those addressed. (4) If, on the other hand, the prophecy was written some time after the restoration, it seems impossible to evade the conclusion reached by Duhamel and Cheyne, that the reference is to a design of the schismatics to erect a rival temple to that of Jerusalem. This theory is perhaps less improbable than it may at first sight appear. In the first place we know that such a temple was actually erected on Mt. Gerizim some time after Nehemiah's second reformation in Judæa (see Ryle's note on Neh. xiii. 28); and it is to be supposed that the project had been talked of for some time previously. Nor is it any formidable objection to say that the argument here employed would tell equally against the pretensions of the sanctuary at Jerusalem. The prophet's assertion must in any case be qualified by the fundamental principle of the Jewish religion that the validity of every act of worship rests on the positive enactment of Jehovah. While Jehovah needs no human service, He is graciously pleased to accept it if rendered in accordance with His expressed will. Now this sanction

He that killeth an ox *is as if* he slew a man; 3
 He that sacrificeth a lamb, *as if* he cut off a dog's
 neck;

had been bestowed on the one sanctuary at Jerusalem, but could not possibly belong to any temple built elsewhere. The erection of such a temple could only be justified on the assumption that man could arbitrarily assign a dwelling-place to the Most High, and to show the futility of this assumption is the purpose of the prophet's lofty declaration. The question turns largely on the interpretation of v. 3. If that verse is rightly understood to mean that the worship of the parties spoken of was really infected by degrading superstitions, it may well be that the persons described are the Samaritans, and in that case it will follow almost of necessity that these are also addressed in v. 1. At the same time, it must be admitted that if the erection of a schismatic Temple were referred to, we should have expected a much more explicit and vigorous condemnation of the project.

3. The first part of the verse runs literally thus: "The slaughterer of the ox, a slayer of a man; the sacrificer of the sheep, a breaker of a dog's neck; the offerer of an oblation,—swine's blood; the maker of a memorial of incense, one that blesseth vanity (i.e. an idol)";—four legitimate sacrificial acts being bracketed with four detestable idolatrous rites. The first member of each pair is probably to be taken as subj., the second as pred., of a sentence. But this leaves open a choice between two interpretations. (a) That the legal sacrificial action is as hateful in the sight of God as the idolatrous rite, so long as it is performed by unspiritual worshippers. (b) That he who does the first series of actions *does also* the second, i.e. combines the service of Jehovah with the most hateful idolatries. It is extremely difficult to decide which is the true sense. The words "as if" in E.V. are of course supplied by the translators, but the rendering is a perfectly fair one. The one fact that favours the second explanation (b) is that the latter part of the verse speaks of those who "delight in their abominations." Unless there be a complete break in the middle of the verse, which is unlikely, this would seem to imply that the abominations enumerated were actually practised by certain persons, who at the same time claimed to be worshippers of Jehovah. Cf. v. 17, lxv. 3—5, lvii. 3—9.

as if he slew a man] The reference may be either to murder merely or to human sacrifice; most probably the latter, since every other member of the sentence expresses a religious act. That human sacrifice was actually perpetrated by those spoken of may be safely inferred from ch. lvii. 5.

breaketh a dog's neck] "This sacrifice...seems...to be alluded to as a Punic rite in Justin XVIII. 1. 10, where we read that Darius sent a message to the Carthaginians forbidding them *to sacrifice human victims and to eat the flesh of dogs*: in the connexion a religious meal must be understood." (W. R. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*², p. 291.) The whole paragraph should be consulted for other important references to

He that offereth an oblation, *as if he offered* swine's blood;

He that burneth incense, *as if he blessed* an idol.

Yea, they have chosen their own ways,

And their soul delighteth in their abominations.

4 I also will choose their delusions,

And will bring their fears upon them;

Because when I called, none did answer;

When I spake, they did not hear:

But they did evil before mine eyes,

And chose *that* in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word;

Your brethren that hated you,

the sacredness of the dog amongst the Semites. See also the note in Cheyne's *Commentary*.

he that offereth an oblation (see on ch. i. 13) (*offereth*) *swine's blood*] See on ch. lxx. 4.

burneth incense] R.V. marg. **maketh a memorial of incense**. The Hebr. verb (*hizkâr*) is connected with *'azkārâh*, the technical name of the part of the meal offering which had to be burned with incense on the altar (cf. Lev. ii. 2, xxiv. 7).

blesseth an idol] Lit. "vanity," but the rendering rightly expresses the sense; cf. ch. xli. 29.

Yea, they have chosen &c.] These clauses form the protasis to v. 4. Render: **As they have chosen... (v. 4) so will I choose &c.**

4. *I also will choose*] with the same shade of meaning as in v. 3 ("will find satisfaction in"). "The Orientals are fond of such antitheses" (Gesenius).

delusions] Perhaps *insults*; see on ch. iii. 4. Cheyne renders expressively "freaks of fortune," remarking, "the word is very peculiar: it represents calamity under the figure of a petulant child."

their fears] i.e. "that which they fear," and strive to avert by their magical rites.

because when I called &c.] Repeated from ch. lxx. 12.

5, 6. A promise to the believing Jews, that they shall speedily witness the discomfiture of their enemies and persecutors.

ye that tremble at his word—thus fulfilling the condition of v. 2. The "word" of the Lord is that spoken by the prophets, and the "trembling" of these devout hearers expresses their scrupulous anxiety to conform with its requirements.

your brethren] men of the same stock with yourselves. The term could not be applied to the known leaders of the Samaritan community, like Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh. ii. 10 &c.), but might be used

That cast you out for my name's sake, said,

Let the LORD be glorified:

But he *shall* appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple,

A voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

Before she travailed, she brought forth;

Before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

Who hath heard such *a thing*? who hath seen such *things*?

Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?

of the community as a whole, composed as it largely was of men of Israelitish descent and, in part, probably of Jews who had been spared in the general deportation of the people.

that hate you] as R.V. Cf. ch. lvii. 4.

that cast you out] Perhaps "that put you far away" (in aversion). Comp. the use of the word in Am. vi. 3 ("that put far away the evil day"). In later Hebr. it means to excommunicate.

said, Let the LORD &c.] Render: **have said, Let Jehovah shew Himself glorious** (pointing the verb as *Niph.*) **that we may see your joy** (cf. R.V.),—a sarcastic allusion to the enthusiastic hopes entertained by the pious Jews of a manifestation of Jehovah to their joy. Cf. ch. v. 19.

but they shall be ashamed] Ch. lxx. 13.

6. Description of the sudden outbreak of Jehovah's destructive might from His city and sanctuary (cf. Am. i. 2; Joel iii. 16; ch. xxxiii. 14) **A noise of uproar from the city! A noise from the temple! The noise of Jehovah rendering recompence** (see on lix. 18) **to His enemies!** (those referred to in v. 5). That these words presuppose the existence of the Temple is certainly the most natural interpretation. The thought of the verse is resumed in vv. 15, 16; the verses immediately following pass abruptly to a different subject.

7—9. The sudden repopulation of the city by her children. The figure is taken from ch. xlix. 17—21, liv. 1; the fact set forth being the instantaneous return of the exiled Israelites, by which, without effort, the poor and struggling Jewish community becomes at once a great nation.

8. *Shall the earth &c.*] Render: **Shall** (the people of) **a land be travailed with in one day?** For "land" in the sense of "population" there do not seem to be any real parallels; Judg. xviii. 30 is hardly a case in point. Possibly the word for "people" (*'am*) should be inserted (Duhm).

Or shall a nation be born at once?

For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD:

Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy God.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her:

Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations;

That ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the LORD,

Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,

And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream:

Then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides,

And be dandled upon *her* knees.

9. Comp. ch. xxxvii. 3; "the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." But in this crisis Jehovah Himself is present, and what He begins He will carry on to its marvellous issue.

The second half of the verse should be rendered as in R.V. **shall I that cause to bring forth shut the womb?** &c.

10, 11. Invitation to the sorrowing children of Zion to rejoice in their mother's consolation.

10. *that mourn for her*] Cf. ch. lvii. 18, lxi. 2, 3.

11. Comp. ch. lx. 16.

abundance] The Heb. word (*ziz*) is of uncertain interpretation. It is found again only in Ps. l. 11, lxxx. 13 in the phrase "beast of the field" (*ziz sādāy*). It is doubtful, however, if the word there be identical with that in this verse. A perfect parallelism (with "breast") would be obtained if we might translate by "udder." Ewald and Cheyne adopt this translation, Ewald without remark, Cheyne with a reference to the Assyrian and the vulgar Arabic, where a word *zizāh* is said to mean "udder" (see his *Comm.* p. 174, and *Origin of the Psalter*, pp. 472f.).

12—14. A promise of prosperity to Jerusalem and her inhabitants.

12. *I will extend* (cf. Gen. xxxix. 21) *peace...like a river*] See ch. xlviii. 18.

the glory of the Gentiles] **the wealth of nations.** Cf. ch. lx. 5, lxi. 6.

borne upon the side (see on lx. 4)...**the knees**] So R.V. The insertion of "her" is misleading. As in lx. 4 (xlix. 22) the children of Zion are represented as carried and nursed by the Gentiles.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort ¹³
you ;

And ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

And when ye see *this*, your heart shall rejoice, ¹⁴

And your bones shall flourish like an herb :

And the hand of the LORD shall be known towards
his servants,

And *his* indignation towards his enemies.

For behold, the LORD will come with fire, ¹⁵

And with his chariots like a whirlwind,

To render his anger with fury,

And his rebuke with flames of fire.

For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead ¹⁶
with all flesh :

And the slain of the LORD shall be many.

dandled] the passive of the verb rendered "play" in ch. xi. 8;
"delight" in ch. v. 7 (R.V. marg.) is a cognate noun.

13. A still finer image, "the grown man coming back with wounds and weariness upon him to be comforted of his mother" (G. A. Smith).

14. R.V. And ye shall see (it) and your heart &c.; recalling ch. lx. 5.
your bones shall flourish like the tender grass (R.V.)] i.e. shall be fresh and full of sap (cf. Job xxi. 24; Prov. xv. 30). So when the strength is exhausted by sickness, the bones are said to be consumed or burn (Ps. xxxi. 10, xxxii. 3, cii. 3; Lam. i. 13).

and his indignation] Strictly: *and he will have indignation* (as R.V.). A.V. would be a better construction if we might supply the suffix for "his" (so Duhm).

15, 16. In fire and tempest—the accompaniments of the theophany—Jehovah will appear to take vengeance on His enemies. There is a connexion with the last clause of v. 14; but the passage reads like a continuation of v. 6. Comp. ch. xxix. 6, xxx. 27 ff.; Ps. l. 3.

15. *with fire*] *in fire*. Cf. Deut. v. 22 ff.

and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind (R.V.)] Cf. Hab. iii. 8; Ps. lxviii. 17. The image is derived from the storm-clouds on which Jehovah rides; ch. xix. 1; Ps. xviii. 10, lxviii. 33; Deut. xxxiii. 26. The phrase is applied in Jer. iv. 13 to the Scythians (or Chaldæans).

16. *by his sword*] See ch. xxvii. 1, xxxiv. 5, 6.

plead] i.e. "enter into judgement," as Ezek. xxxviii. 22; Joel iii. 2.
the slain of the LORD shall be many] Cf. Jer. xxv. 33; Zeph. ii. 12 (Hebr.)

17. A renewed description of the apostates, in terms similar to v. 3, lxv. 3—5, 11. Although the judgement is "with all flesh" it has a special significance for these reprobates. The connexion of v. 17 with v. 16 is not, however, beyond suspicion.

- 17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves
in the gardens
Behind one *tree* in the midst,
Eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the
mouse,
Shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.
- 18 For I *know* their works and their thoughts:

in the gardens] **for the gardens**, i.e. in order to go into the sacred gardens (ch. lrv. 3) where the illegal rites were to be consummated ("ad sacra in lucis obeunda").

behind one tree in the midst] A difficult and much disputed phrase. The insertion of the word "tree" is purely gratuitous, and indefensible. If the consonantal text be sound the best rendering by far is **after one in the midst**; i.e. following the actions of a hierophant or mystagogue, who stands in the midst of the brotherhood and regulates the important ceremony of purification. Comp. Ezek. viii. 11, "...seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and *in the midst* of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand." There does not appear to be any valid objection to this interpretation, although it is not supported by any ancient authority. The Massoretes substitute the fem. of "one" for the masc., thinking apparently of the image of some goddess as the central object. (The Babylonian Codex and the Soncino Bible have the fem. in the text.) Many commentators, guided by a faulty reference in Macrobius (*Saturn.* i. 23), have supposed that the word for "one" (אֶחָד) contains the name of a deity; but this view, although revived by Lagarde, finds little favour among modern scholars. Several ancient versions (Pesh., Sym., Theod.) render "one after another" (Targ. "company after company"), which would be possible if we might insert an additional אַחֵר אַחֵר (אֶחָד אַחֵר אַחֵר), but it leaves "in the midst" unexplained. Cheyne (*Introd.* p. 370) reads with Klostermann אַחֵר אַחֵר בְּתֵנֶךְ—"one (consecrating) the other on the tip of the ear"; an ingenious emendation, but hardly yielding an easier sense than the received (consonantal) text as understood above.

swine's flesh] ch. lrv. 4.

the abomination] Hebr. *shéqef*, the general name for unclean animals; Lev. vii. 21; xi. 10 ff. (*passim*); cf. Ezek. viii. 10. (Duhm reads *shéref*, "vermin," creeping or swarming creatures).

the mouse] an unclean animal according to Lev. xi. 29. Of the 23 species of small rodents included under the name in Palestine, several are esteemed edible by the Arabs (Tristram, *Nat. Hist.*, pp. 122 ff.). The allusion here without doubt is to sacrificial meals, the mouse being a sacred animal in the same sense as the swine and the dog. See W. R. Smith, *Rel. of Sem.*² p. 293; who mentions a statement of Maimonides that the Harranians sacrificed field-mice.

shall be consumed] **shall come to an end**; see on next verse.

It shall come, that *I* will gather all nations and tongues;

And they shall come, and see my glory.

And I will set a sign among them,

And I will send those that escape of them unto the nations,

To Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow,

19

18—22. The extension of the knowledge of Jehovah's power to the outlying nations, and the consequent voluntary surrender of the Israelites exiled among them.

The first sentence of v. 18 is untranslatable as it stands, and the text is certainly corrupt. A good suggestion is made by Duhm. He transfers the phrase "their works and their thoughts" to the last clause of v. 17 ("their works and their thoughts together shall come to an end"); then dropping the fem. term. of the participle the remaining sentence reads, **And I am coming to gather all the nations and tongues.** Both verses are thus improved, and the new section beginning here is disentangled from its misleading association with the idea of judgement.

all nations and tongues] An expression characteristic of the Aramaic part of the Book of Daniel (ch. iii. 4 and parallels); cf. also Zech. viii. 23.

they shall come, and see my glory] i.e., probably, the visible supernatural glory of Jehovah as He dwells in the Temple. See Ezek. xliii. 1—4. (The section contains many traces of the influence of the book of Ezekiel.) The idea that the nations shall assemble to be destroyed by Jehovah (Zech. xiv. 2, 12 ff.; Joel iii. 2; Zeph. iii. 8) is alien to the tenor of the verse and is not necessarily implied by v. 19.

19. *I will set a sign among them*] i.e. perform a miracle (ch. vii. 11) that shall convince them of Jehovah's divinity.

I will send...them] **I will send from them escaped ones**, survivors (cf. xlv. 20) of the judgement depicted in v. 16. The purpose is to spread the tidings of Jehovah's glory.

to Tarshish...Favan] All these names are taken from the book of Ezekiel; see xxvii. 10, 12 f., xxxviii. 1, xxxix. 1. So Duhm, who thinks the whole line is a gloss. *Tarshish*=Tartessus; see on ch. ii. 16. A name *Pul* occurs nowhere else, and it is doubtless here a clerical error for **Put** (so LXX. Φούδ). Phut and Lud are mentioned together in Jer. xlv. 9; Ezek. xxvii. 10, xxx. 5; and in Gen. x. 6, 13 both peoples are connected genealogically with Mizraim (Egypt). Probably therefore two African nations are denoted.

that draw the bow] The bow is mentioned as the weapon of the Lydians (Lud) in Jer. xlv. 9. The LXX. reads Μόσσηκ (Meshech). This is attractive, because of the resemblance to *mōshēkē* (drawing), and because Meshech and Tubal are nearly always associated (Gen. x. 2; Ezek. xxvii. 13, xxxii. 26, &c.). They are the Moschi and Tibareni of classical writers, the Muski and Tabal of the Assyrian monuments, tribes lying south and south-east of the Black Sea (Schrader, *Cun. Inscr.*

To Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off,
That have not heard my fame, neither have seen my
glory;

And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

20 And they shall bring all your brethren *for* an offering
unto the LORD out of all nations

Upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon
mules, and upon swift beasts,

To my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD,

As the children of Israel bring an offering

In a clean vessel *into* the house of the LORD.

pp. 82, 84). If the reading of the LXX. be adopted it will be necessary to find an equivalent for *qésheth* (bow); and Duhm suggests *Rosh* from Ezek. xxxviii. 1, xxxix. 1 (see Davidson's Note).

Javan (= *Ἰάβωβ*) the Ionians, is the Hebrew name for the Greek race.

the isles (coastlands, ch. xl. 15) *afar off, that have not heard my fame* &c.] This distinction between the nearer nations who have experienced something of the greatness of Jehovah, through contact with His people Israel, and the remoter nations who have not heard His name, originates with the prophet Ezekiel. It underlies the conception of the invasion of Gog's host and its destruction as described in ch. xxxviii. f. Gog is the leader and representative of the outlying nations of the earth, and the demonstration of Jehovah's power against them falls at a time subsequent to the peaceful settlement of Israel in its own land, and long after judgement has been executed on the neighbouring states which had been in contact with Israel throughout its history (see Davidson, *Camb. Bible, Ezekiel*, pp. 273 ff.). But while the distinction is common to the two prophets, the development of the idea is strikingly different. In Ezekiel Gog's ignorance of Jehovah tempts him to an act of sacrilege on the land of Israel, which is avenged by the annihilation of him and his host. The spirit of this passage is more evangelical. Jehovah sends missionaries from the nearer nations to those who have not heard His fame nor seen His glory; and the report carries conviction to their minds, so that they restore the Israelites exiled amongst them, as an offering to the Lord.

20. The subject of the sentence is the nations. Cf. ch. xlix. 22, lx. 9, xiv. 2.

litters] Elsewhere only in Num. vii. 3 (in the phrase "covered wagons").

swift beasts] dromedaries (R.V. marg.).

21. And of them also will I take &c. (R.V.). Commentators differ in opinion as to whether the ministers of the sanctuary are to be taken from the restored exiles or from the Gentiles who bring them back; the language is consistent with either supposition. The latter is thought by some to be excluded by lvi. 6 f. (shewing the utmost limit of concession

And I will also take of them for priests *and* for ²¹
Levites, saith the LORD.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I ²²
will make,

Shall remain before me, saith the LORD,
So shall your seed and your name remain.

And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon ²³
to another,

And from one sabbath to another,
Shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the
LORD.

And they shall go forth, and look ²⁴
Upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed
against me :

to foreigners), and lxi. 6 (where a priestly standing is assigned to the Jews). These considerations, however, are not decisive; and the emphasis of the statement is perhaps better explained by the bolder conception. In any case the prophet seems to contemplate a suspension of the provisions of the Law, for the words "I will take" suggest something more than that those who are priests and Levites by birth shall be permitted to exercise their hereditary functions.

for priests and for Levites] Strictly, "for the priests, for the Levites," implying that they were to be given for the service of the priests and Levites. But the article should probably be omitted, and the rendering of E.V. retained. The conjunction "and" is supplied by all the Versions and some MSS. The duplication of the preposition distinguishes the expression from a characteristic phrase of Deuteronomy (see Driver on Deut. xviii. 1), so that we cannot (without a change of text) render "for Levitical priests." Nothing would be gained by such an alteration, for the adj. "Levitical" in this connexion would be a meaningless addition.

22. Comp. Jer. xxxi. 35 f., xxxiii. 25 f.

the new heavens and the new earth] ch. lxxv. 17.

23, 24. Month by month and week by week all flesh shall come to Jerusalem to worship, while the dead bodies of the rebellious Israelites shall remain as a fearful spectacle and an abhorring to all flesh.

23. Comp. Zech. xiv. 16. *from one new moon to another, &c.*] Lit. "as often as (ch. xxviii. 19) there is a new-moon on its new-moon &c.," i.e. apparently "at each separate new-moon &c.,"—a peculiar idiom found also in Num. xxviii. 10, 14.

24. *And they* (the worshippers) *shall go forth*] to some place in the vicinity of Jerusalem, no doubt the Valley of Hinnom, Neh. xi. 30; cf. Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16; 2 Chr. xxviii. 3; Jer. vii. 32; 2 Ki. xxiii. 10. (See below.)

the men that rebelled against me] The apostates so often referred to in the last two chapters.

For their worm shall not die,
Neither shall their fire be quenched;
And they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

for their worm shall not die, &c.] (see below) Judith xvi. 17; Eccclus. vii. 17; Mark ix. 44 ff.

an abhorring] The Hebrew word (*dērā'ôn*) occurs again only in Dan. xii. 2.

This verse is the basis of the later Jewish conception of Gehenna as the place of everlasting punishment (see Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 355—360). Gehenna is the Hebrew *Gē-Hinnôm* (Valley of Hinnom), the place where of old human sacrifices were offered to Molech (Jer. vii. 31 f., *et passim*), and for this reason desecrated by king Josiah (2 Ki. xxiii. 10). Afterwards it became a receptacle for filth and refuse, and Rabbinical tradition asserts that it was the custom to cast out unclean corpses there, to be burned or to undergo decomposition. This is in all probability the scene which had imprinted itself on the imagination of the writer, and which was afterwards projected into the unseen world as an image of endless retribution. The Talmudic theology locates the mouth of hell in the Valley of Hinnom. But how much of the later theology lies in this passage it is difficult to say. Nothing is expressly said of torment endured by the dead, but only of the loathsome spectacle they present to the living; although the former idea may be implied and is suggested by a comparison with ch. l. 11. "If this passage is of too early a date, as Dillmann thinks, to admit of a reference to the horrors of the Valley of Gehinnom, the double figure of the worm and the fire may be due to the two ways of disposing of the dead, by interment and by cremation. The immediate object of the description of the worm as never dying and the fire as never being quenched, appears to be to mark the destination of those men as a perpetual witness to the consuming judgements of God, and one which all flesh may see. The incongruity of the idea of a fire burning a dead body and never going out, is supposed, however, to point to something more.... It may be that the dead body is poetically conceived to be conscious of the pains of the worm and the fire, as Dillmann supposes [cf. Job xiv. 22]. But even that goes beyond the immediate object, which is to present the men in question as a perpetual spectacle of shame to all beholders" (Salmond, *l.c.* p. 212). The view thus expressed is reasonable if the passage was written by the author of the preceding chapters. But there is much to be said for the opinion (of Duham and Cheyne) that the last two verses are an appendix to the prophecy, written at a later time, so that the language may to some extent be saturated with the ideas which were afterwards associated with the word Gehenna.

In Heb. Bibles and MSS. part of v. 23 is repeated (without the vowel signs) after v. 24, in accordance with a Massoretic direction, so that the reading in the Synagogue might "close with words of comfort." The same practice was followed in the reading of the "Twelve" (Minor) Prophets, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes. See Ginsburg's *Introduction*, p. 850.

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

THE "SERVANT OF JEHOVAH" IN CH. XL.—LV.

THE conception of the "Servant of Jehovah" in this prophecy is so difficult, and is the subject of so much controversy, that it may be useful to examine, more systematically than was possible in the Notes, the various theories that have been advanced. It hardly needs to be said how greatly the basis of discussion is affected by the tendency of some recent critics to isolate the four "Servant-passages" (ch. xlii. 1—4, xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, and lii. 13—liii. 12) and treat them as interpolations (see Introd. p. liv). Except in these places (and the appendices to two of them, xlii. 5—7 and xlix. 7—12) there is not the least doubt that the Servant of the Lord represents the people of Israel. Again, one of the principal arguments against the view that the Servant is ever an individual is the unlikelihood that the term should be used by the same writer in two different senses (Introd. p. xxxiii f.). But if the passages in question have no organic connexion with the rest of the prophecy, it becomes quite conceivable that we have to do with two distinct conceptions of the Servant, one being that of the second Isaiah himself, and the other that of the unknown author of the interpolated sections. It is therefore of some importance to ascertain, by an independent examination of the Servant-passages, whether this is the case. The writer of these pages does not indeed accept the hypothesis of interpolation; although he would admit that a radical divergence of view with regard to the Servant of Jehovah would be a strong argument in its favour. If, on the other hand, it should be found that the conception which prevails in the rest of the book is consistent with the teaching of these passages, this result will undoubtedly strengthen the presumption that they form an integral part of the prophecy.

The theories to be considered fall naturally into two clauses: (i) those which explain the Servant as a *collective* idea, representing either the nation of Israel or some smaller community within it; and (ii) those which regard the Servant as an *individual*. Both of these can in one form or another be traced back to ancient times, and each has points of contact in the recognised usage of the O.T. The individual explanation might be based on the application of the name to the great religious personalities of the O.T., such as Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 5, &c.), David (Ps. lxxxix. 3, 20, &c.), Isaiah (Is. xx. 3), Job (i. 8, &c.) or the prophets generally (Am. iii. 7; Jer. vii. 25, &c.); while the collective theories are justified by its application to Israel in Ezek. xxviii. 25, &c.

i. That the Servant of Jehovah denotes *Israel* in some sense is the

oldest interpretation for which literary evidence can be produced. Its antiquity is proved by the LXX., which inserts the words "Jacob" and "Israel" in its translation of ch. xlii. 1. And if the word "Israel" in the Heb. text of xlix. 3 be a gloss, it is at all events a very ancient gloss (being found in the LXX.); and both facts together shew how naturally the minds of early readers adopted the national interpretation of at least two of the Servant-passages. But this general view that the Servant is Israel is capable of several modifications, which it is necessary to consider separately.

(1) The simplest form of the theory is that generally maintained by the Jewish interpreters, although it is also advocated by some Christian scholars (Hitzig, Reuss, Giesebrecht, König, Budde, &c.). In the view of these writers the Servant of Jehovah represents the whole *people of Israel* as it actually existed in history. The nation is of course personified and to a certain extent idealised, but there is no distinction in the prophet's mind between the historical Israel and an ideal Israel; the conception is merely a poetic presentation of the destinies of the historic Israel, and the idealisation proceeds no further than in other parts of the second Isaiah. The chief recommendation of the theory, indeed, is that it attaches the same significance to the expression "Servant of Jehovah" wherever it occurs throughout the prophecy.

The difficulties of this interpretation appear when we apply it to the principal passage, ch. lii. 13 ff. It is necessary to assume that those who speak in liii. 1—6 are the Gentile nations, at whose hands Israel has suffered grievous wrongs, who have misjudged and despised it, but who now perceive that it has borne the chastisement of their sins. The whole passage becomes a parable of the history and destiny of the people of Jehovah. The death of the Servant denotes the Exile, which was the death of the nation; and his resurrection is a figure for the glorious restoration of Israel, which is followed by the conversion of the heathen to the true God. It is not to be denied that many features of the conception are satisfactorily explained by this hypothesis. That the idea of Israel suffering for the good of the world is foreign to the O.T. is not perhaps a decisive argument against it, for there is a truth in the idea (see Rom. xi. 11 f.), and on any view of the Servant the passage contains thoughts more profound than are expressed elsewhere in the O.T. But the insuperable objection to this explanation is the unnaturalness of the assumption that the speakers in liii. 1 ff. are the heathen. There is nothing in the language to suggest this; and the religious attitude expressed in these verses is such as no prophet could have attributed to the heathen world. When the pressure of the theory is relaxed, it is impossible to escape the impression that the speakers are Israelites, from which it necessarily follows that the Servant and the actual nation of Israel are not identical. And this inference is confirmed and put beyond all reasonable doubt by ch. xlix. 1—6, where the idea that the Servant has a mission to discharge towards Israel shews that some distinction must be recognised between the Servant and the historical nation. This view, therefore, although it may contain elements of truth, does not satisfy all the conditions involved in the problem.

(2) A modified form of the national interpretation is that the Servant of Jehovah is a personification, not of Israel as a whole, but of the *spiritual Israel*, the religious kernel of the nation, on whom the sufferings of the Exile fell most severely, and in whom the hope of the future lay (Knobel, &c.). Much that is said of the Servant no doubt finds an explanation in the experience of this faithful minority of the people. It was their mission—and they were doubtless partly conscious of it—to bring their nation to repentance, and ultimately to extend the knowledge of God to the Gentiles. It is conceivable that in the discharge of this mission they suffered persecution at the hands of their own countrymen during the Exile. But it is difficult to think that there can have been such a difference between the mass of the exiles and the believing remnant as would account for the language of ch. liii. Although the national calamity was felt with peculiar severity by those who recognised it to be the just punishment of the sin of Israel, there was nothing in their outward lot that could have given rise to the impression that they were in a special degree the objects of the divine wrath. Moreover, the Servant is described as one who has died and is destined to be raised again from the dead. This has a meaning if the subject be Israel, which as a nation ceased to exist at the Exile; but it could not be said that the spiritual Israel died in the captivity. And even if this theory could be successfully carried through the Servant-passages, it would not be consistent with the teaching of the rest of the book. The people of Israel and the spiritual Israel are distinct subjects, and it is not likely that the same writer included both under a common designation.

(3) All these objections apply with equal force to a view advocated by Gesenius and a few others, that by the Servant is meant *the prophetic order*. This interpretation derives whatever plausibility it possesses from the prophetic traits in the delineation of the Servant's person and work. But these are features inseparable from his function as the organ of Jehovah's revelation, and can be explained on any interpretation of the title. Otherwise there is almost nothing to be said for this now discredited theory.

(4) There remains the view for which a preference is expressed in this volume, that the Servant of the Lord is *the ideal Israel*. The advantage of this definition is that, while harmonising the various references to the Servant which occur throughout the prophecy, it enables us to combine in a single conception the aspects of truth represented by other interpretations. The Servant is first of all a personification of Israel as it exists in the mind and purpose of God, of the ideal for the sake of which the nation has been chosen and towards which its history is being fashioned. This ideal has never yet been realised in the earthly Israel, and hence it is described (as in ch. xlii. 1 ff.) in language which could not be used of any section of the historic people. But on the other hand, since the ideal is inseparably associated with the nation, it is intelligible that the significant facts of the history should be introduced into the portrait of the Servant, and that he should thus be spoken of as one who has passed through certain experiences and has still a career before him (xlix. 1 ff., l. 4 ff., lii. 13 ff.). On the same principle we can understand how the character and life of the Servant should reflect the

experience of the spiritually-minded Israelites, who had become conscious of the nation's destiny and mission; these formed an inner circle of religious fellowship, approximating more closely to the ideal than the nation as a whole had ever done. Again, it is natural to suppose that the concrete details of the picture (especially in ch. liii.) were partly suggested by the fate of some eminent servant of God, such as Jeremiah, or, as others think, an unknown saint and martyr of the Exile. Finally, although this probably goes beyond the writer's conscious meaning, the personification of the ideal Israel easily passes into the conception of the ideal Israelite, and thus the figure of the Servant becomes in a real sense an indirect prophecy of Jesus Christ. Israel, in fact, was a type of Christ, and Christ fulfilled the mission of Israel.

Some of the difficulties involved in this interpretation are dealt with in the Introduction (p. xxxiv) and these need not be referred to here. Amongst others which may occur to the reader perhaps the most important arises from the description of the Servant as a sacrifice in ch. liii. How, it will be asked, can the ideal Israel be said to suffer for the sins of individual Israelites? It is a question not easy to answer, but if the general conception be accepted the answer must be somewhat as follows. The fact of vicarious suffering was brought home to the mind of the prophet by what he observed in the spiritual history of his time. In the calamity of the Exile the greatest sufferers were necessarily those most loyal to Jehovah; and there may have been individuals, who might be considered innocent, whose tragic and inexplicable fate caused the greatest perplexity to believers in the justice of God. The problem of retribution was in the air, and was kept alive by facts like these. It may therefore be supposed that the prophet, with all this before him, was led further to perceive that the suffering of the righteous for the guilty is a divinely appointed law of the spiritual life, that it is a soteriological principle, and that this principle is so essentially bound up with the vocation of Israel that the Divine purpose of salvation could only be effected through its operation. If this was his thought, it was natural that it should find expression in his conception of the Servant of Jehovah, who embodies all that is of religious significance in the true idea of Israel. The sufferings of all the righteous men who bore on their hearts the burden of Israel's guilt, are transferred to the ideal figure in whom Israel's character and destiny are reflected; and thus Jehovah's Servant is the meek and patient martyr and the sinless sacrifice for his people. Such a view is in perfect harmony with the Christological reference of the prophecy in the sense stated above. It is one of the marvels of the Old Testament that the idea of vicarious suffering, which was but imperfectly illustrated in the history of Israel, is so clearly and profoundly apprehended by this prophet that only "the immeasurable step of the Incarnation" could reveal the perfect life in which his creation is realised.

ii. The opinion that the Servant is an *individual* is maintained in two very different forms: (1) that he was an actual historical person, a contemporary of the writer of the passages which relate to him; (2) that he is an ideal man whose appearance in the future is predicted.

(1) Of the first view, the most consistent exposition ever given is perhaps to be found in the Commentary of Duhm. He holds that the Servant of Jehovah was a religious teacher (a *Thora-Lehrer*), who lived in the early post-exilic period, before the date of Trito-Isaiah; and that the Servant-passages were composed by one who was his disciple. The description of his sufferings and death is to be taken literally; he was a man disfigured by leprosy, spurned and persecuted by his generation, one who, after being cut off by his disease, was laid in a dishonoured grave. Yet the impression made on his adherents by his character and teaching was such as to produce the expectation that he would rise from the dead and carry his work to a successful and glorious issue. The improbabilities of this theory are so manifest as almost to place it beyond possibility of belief. (a) It is hardly credible that an individual such as is supposed could have existed and exerted the profound spiritual influence attributed to him, without leaving some trace in the history of the time or in the subsequent literature. (b) The lofty and world-wide mission of the Servant, as well as his altogether unique relation to Jehovah, would be inconceivable from the O.T. standpoint if the subject were a private individual. (c) A still more serious difficulty is presented by the idea of a personal resurrection. Nothing urged by Duhm relieves the objections to supposing that such an expectation should have been entertained by a writer of this period (see on ch. lxxv. 20).

(2) The alternative form of the individual interpretation is that the passages in question are a Messianic prophecy in either the definite or the more general sense of the expression. It is represented by the Targum (on xlii. 1 and lii. 13) where the reference is explicitly said to be to the Messiah. It has of course been the prevalent view in the Christian Church, which has always regarded the conception as a direct and conscious prophecy of Christ. The chief arguments against it are those stated in the Introduction (p. xxxv), and proceed on the assumption that a consistent usage must be maintained throughout the prophecy. But even if it were admitted that the Servant-passages represent an independent point of view, there are still some difficulties which cannot be ignored. In the first place it is surely remarkable that the language is *never* that of prediction. The Servant is invariably spoken of as having a present existence; what is foretold concerning him is not his appearance in a future age, but his exaltation, which is the result of his past labours and sufferings. The occurrence of the word "Israel" in ch. xlix. 3 would also, if genuine, appear to be irreconcilable with this hypothesis. And even if these objections should be disposed of, it would still remain a question whether the rôle assigned to the Servant is not too great to be sustained by any individual, however exalted, according to Old Testament modes of thought (see *Intro.* p. xxxvi).

To some minds, it will probably appear that the choice lies between i. (4) and ii. (2). Either the ideal Israel or an ideal Israelite must be assumed as the subject in the prophet's mind when he speaks of the Servant of Jehovah. Many of the best expositors (such as Delitzsch and G. A. Smith) think that neither suffices alone to set forth all that is meant by the expression. The idea is supposed to expand and contract

in the mind of the writer, being sometimes so large as to include the whole of Israel, and at other times concentrating itself on the person of an ideal man whom the prophet expects to arise and fulfil the mission in which Israel failed. This is of course a correct explanation of how the ideal was fulfilled, but whether it is true to the prophet's conception is another question. While admitting the truth of the collective interpretation it does not remove a single difficulty of the alternative view. Its only recommendation is that it does justice to those features of the picture which naturally suggest a human personality; but this advantage is gained at the expense of the principle that the subjects to which the name is applied must be presumed to be essentially identical.

NOTE II.

ON THE MEANING OF "RIGHTEOUSNESS" IN CH. XL.—LXVI.

THE variety of senses which it is necessary to assign to the words "righteousness," "righteous" &c., in different passages of this prophecy is apt to cause perplexity to the reader. It will not be supposed that the ambiguity arises from any laxity in the prophet's use of words; it lies in the idea itself as it is unfolded in the general usage of the O.T. Hence a brief statement of the applications most frequently occurring may help the reader to judge for himself what meaning is intended to be conveyed in each particular passage.

The first thing to be noted is that "the ideas of right and wrong among the Hebrews are forensic ideas; that is, the Hebrew always thinks of the right and the wrong as if they were to be settled before a judge. Righteousness is to the Hebrew not so much a moral quality as a legal status. The word 'righteous' (*ṣaddîq*) means simply 'in the right,' and the word 'wicked' (*rāshā'*) means 'in the wrong'" (W. R. Smith, *Prophets of Israel*², pp. 71 f.). Comp. Ex. ix. 27: "Jehovah is *in the right*, and I and my people are *in the wrong*"; Gen. xxxviii. 26: "she is *in the right as against me*," &c. It is not asserted that this was the primary idea of the root; and there may be a few instances in the O.T. which point back to some simpler conception in which there was no reference to judicial procedure. But these instances are quite exceptional, if they exist at all; and the forensic aspect of the notion so nearly covers the whole field of O.T. usage that attention may here be confined to the important developments to which it gives rise.

In this forensic use of the group of words expressing the idea of righteousness three distinct applications are included:—

(a) Righteousness is the quality expected and required *in the judge* (or the king in his judicial capacity). His proper function is to "declare in the right" (*hiṣdîq*) him who *is* in the right (*ṣaddîq*) and to condemn him who is in the wrong (*rāshā'*); in the discharge of this duty he manifests the virtue of righteousness (*ṣēdeq*). E.g. Deut. xvi. 18: "they (the judges) shall judge righteous judgement (*mishpāṭ ṣēdeq*)";

i. 16: "judge righteousness (*ṣēdeq*)." Cf. 2 Sam. xv. 4; Is. xi. 4, 5, xvi. 5 &c.

(b) The righteousness of the private citizen is such a course of conduct as will stand the scrutiny of an impartial judge. Originally, perhaps, the word was used of being in the right as against another person in a particular case; as in Gen. xxxviii. 26; 1 Sam. xxiv. 17; Prov. xviii. 17 ("He that pleadeth his cause first is in the right, but &c."); Deut. xxv. 1 &c.; or being innocent of a particular charge (2 Ki. x. 9). But by a natural extension of meaning it came to denote right moral conduct in general, especially when the implied reference is to the judgement of God (Job iv. 17; Ezek. xviii. 5; Ps. xv. 2; Prov. xvi. 8 &c.).

(c) Righteousness means further the legal status which results from a judicial sentence in one's favour. This sense is so far distinct from (b) that the Hebrews could speak of "removing the righteousness of the righteous from him" (Is. v. 23), i.e. depriving the man who is really in the right of the righteous standing which a just decision would have secured to him. Cf. Ezek. xviii. 20 ("the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him") &c.

The social righteousness so much insisted on by the prophets is the ideal state of things in which the three aspects of the notion, just enumerated, are comprehended in a higher unity. It appears to be conceived as an attribute of the community rather than of individuals; its chief element is a sound administration of justice (*a*), maintaining a perfect correspondence between real (*b*), and legal (*c*), right. This is the case, *e.g.* in Is. i. 21, where Jerusalem is described as a "city in which righteousness used to dwell," as is clear from the contrast in v. 23. So also in Am. v. 7, 24 (cf. v. 15 "set up judgement in the gate" where the word used is *mishpat*), vi. 12; Is. v. 7, xxxii. 16 f. &c. The same conception is found in ch. lix. 4, 14, where righteousness and judgement are personified as the qualities that ought to preside over judicial procedure (see under ii. 1, below).

Now these forensic analogies form the basis of the religious use of the terms which is most characteristic of the second part of the book of Isaiah. The subjects of which righteousness is most frequently predicated are Jehovah on the one hand and Israel on the other. The two ideas are correlative and either may be defined in terms of the other. Jehovah's righteousness is the quality exhibited in the vindication of Israel's right, and again the right of Israel depends upon its relation to the righteousness of Jehovah. These definitions would not be quite exhaustive, but in a great number of instances it may be said that the righteousness of Israel and that of Jehovah are the two sides of one idea, both resting on the truth that the cause of Israel and the cause of Jehovah are one.

i. The righteousness of God may be described as that attribute on which Israel can rely for the vindication of its right, although it is not easy to define the attribute. In some cases it is sufficient to think of it as the attribute belonging to Jehovah as the Judge of all the earth, in virtue of which He punishes wrong wherever it is perpetrated (see ch. li. 5 "mine arms shall judge the peoples"). But it is manifest that

this conception is not wide enough to include all the forms in which the idea occurs. There are many passages which shew clearly that righteousness is an absolute quality of the divine character, revealing itself in ways that are independent of Jehovah's judicial action, or His special relation to Israel. The word in fact appears to embrace all that constitutes *trustworthiness* in personal relations,—truthfulness in speech, steadfastness of purpose, consistency of principle and method, &c. These essential qualities of Godhead, however, receive a specific determination through Jehovah's covenant with Israel, and hence righteousness may sometimes be equivalent to fidelity to the terms of the covenant. In other cases the trustworthiness ascribed to Jehovah is His rectitude as the Supreme Judge of men and nations. And finally the divine attribute of righteousness is conceived as embodied in the act of deliverance by which Israel's right is vindicated, and in the state of salvation which ensues.

The following passages will illustrate the different aspects of the idea of righteousness as predicated of Jehovah. (1) *Truthfulness or straightforwardness of speech* is the idea chiefly emphasised in ch. xlv. 19: "I am Jehovah, who speak righteousness, announce rightness"; perhaps also in v. 21: "a righteous and saving God." (In v. 23 the sense may rather be constancy of purpose;—see below.) Comp. also lxiii. 1. The meaning is slightly varied in xli. 26 ("that we may say, 'He is right'"), and xliii. 9 ("that they may be in the right");—both referring to the heathen deities directly, but indirectly to Jehovah. In these cases righteousness denotes correctness of prediction,—correspondence of the announcement with the fact. These closely related uses of the word are very rare in Hebrew, but common in Arabic where "*sidq*" is by implication the agreeing of what is said with what is conceived in the mind, and with the thing told of, together" (Lane's *Lexicon*). (2) *Steadfastness and consistency of purpose* is expressed in xli. 10 ("I uphold thee with my right hand of righteousness), xlii. 6 ("called thee in righteousness"), xlv. 13 ("I have raised him [Cyrus] up in righteousness"). In the first two passages righteousness no doubt includes Jehovah's fidelity to His covenant with Israel; although this fidelity is not to be conceived as an obligation which He owes to Israel, but as the expression of His own essential character. In the same sense the word is probably to be understood in xlii. 21 ("it pleased Jehovah for His righteousness' sake to magnify revelation" &c.); the motive for the abundance of His revelation being His fixed purpose to make of Israel a people for Himself. (3) *Judicial righteousness* appears from the context to be the idea most prominent in l. 8 ("He that justifieth me"), and lix. 16 ("His righteousness upheld Him"). (4) The places where righteousness, as a divine attribute, occurs in parallelism with "salvation" are ch. xlvi. 13, li. 5, 6, 8, lvi. 1 b. Although the two ideas are practically identical the words are not strictly synonyms. Salvation is the outward act of deliverance and the state of things ushered in by it, while righteousness is the divine quality which is illustrated and embodied in the act. But the divine righteousness which thus assumes a concrete external form ceases to be a mere attribute of Jehovah; it becomes an objective fact, and hence, as we

shall see, it may be spoken of indifferently as the manifestation of the righteousness of God or as the manifestation of the righteous standing which belongs to Israel.

ii. The righteousness of Israel is also a many-sided conception, combining elements which can only be elucidated from the peculiar religious situation caused by the Exile. First of all there was in the mind of the people the consciousness of being *in the right* as against the nations that oppressed them. Whatever might be the explanation of Israel's calamities, the sense of having suffered wrong and injustice at the hands of heathen conquerors could not be suppressed; and this fact constituted a claim on the righteousness of God for the vindication of Israel's right. The feeling is sometimes expressed by earlier prophets, especially by Habakkuk, who applies the epithets *ṣaddîq* and *rāṣhā'* to Israel and the Chaldeans respectively (Hab. i. 4, 13). But along with this there went a profound conviction, produced by the teaching of prophecy, and enforced by the lesson of the Captivity, of being *in the wrong* before God. "History, to Israel, was God's supreme tribunal... But when the decision of history went against the nation, when they were threatened with expulsion from their land and with extinction as a people, that just meant that the Supreme Judge of men was giving His sentence against them. Israel had broken the terms of the Covenant. They had lost their right; they were no longer *righteous*" (G. A. Smith, *Exposition*, Vol. II, p. 218). Thus "Israel's unrighteousness is her state of discredit and disgrace under the hands of God; her righteousness, which she hopes for, is her restoral to her station and destiny as the elect people" (*ibid.* pp. 219 f.).

Now both these points of view are represented in this prophecy. The first appears in ch. xl. 27, where Israel complains that "my right (*mishpāt*) is passed over from my God" (comp. also xlix. 4, lii. 4). The second is most clearly expressed in the ironical challenge of xliii. 26 ("declare thou that thou mayest be pronounced in the right"), and is involved in the frequent confessions of national guilt which occur in the prophecy. In each case righteousness is a matter of legal standing, and it is not easy at first sight to see how the sense of demerit before God is consistent with the consciousness of a right whose vindication is hoped for from Jehovah. The reconciliation must be found in the larger view of the divine righteousness which includes Jehovah's steadfast adherence to the purpose He had in His choice of Israel. That purpose is exhibited in the figure of the ideal Servant of Jehovah, who is perfectly righteous (ch. liii. 11) and who by his unmerited sufferings and death procures forgiveness and a righteous relation to God for the whole nation. But besides denoting a legal status to be vindicated by Jehovah's judicial interposition, righteousness is also used ethically of the character and life which is right in the sight of God.

We may now attempt to classify the principal passages where righteousness is spoken of in connexion with Israel, although it must be premised that the precise shade of meaning conveyed is frequently indeterminate and the classification therefore somewhat uncertain. (1) The passages where the words are used of *civic* righteousness in the sense of the older prophets have already been referred to; viz.,

ch. lix. 4, 14. Other places where the same sense may possibly be intended, or at least included, are xlv. 8, liv. 14, lvi. 12, lix. 9, lx. 17. (2) The *ethical* idea of righteousness, as equivalent to the possession of a right moral and religious character, appears to be implied in ch. liii. 11, lvi. 12, lviii. 2. In these instances the subject is either Israel or the Servant of the Lord; of individual Israelites the word is used in li. 1, 7, lvii. 1, lx. 21, lxiv. 5, 6; in xlviii. 1 the word seems to have the narrower meaning of truthfulness. (3) On the other hand, the *forensic* idea (righteousness as a religious standing) predominates in xlv. 12, liv. 17, lvii. 12. (4) Lastly, the forensic idea passes over into that of righteousness manifested in external prosperity and glory. This is the case in ch. lxi. 10, lxii. 1, where the parallel expression is "salvation" (cf. xlv. 8); in lviii. 8, lxii. 2 the parallel is "glory," in xlviii. 18, lx. 17, "peace"; cf. xlv. 24, 25. In these passages "righteousness" might be rendered "justification"; it denotes the blessings conferred on Israel in token that its right is acknowledged and declared by God (see under i. 4, above). To this class may be assigned two other passages, where righteousness is, as it were, *hypostatized* and spoken of as a state of things created on earth by Jehovah; viz., xlv. 8 (in parallelism with "salvation") and lxi. 11 ("righteousness and praise").

A somewhat peculiar use of the word is found in ch. xli. 2, where (if the translation given in the notes be correct) it is said of Cyrus that "righteousness attends him at every step." Here righteousness must be equivalent to "success" or "victory"; the idea being that the remarkable successes of Cyrus on the battle-field were decisions by the Almighty in his favour and the demonstration to all the world that his was the right cause. A sense closely approaching to "victory" is implied in xlv. 24 ("righteousnesses and strength"; cf. v. 25: "all the seed of Israel shall have right, and shall triumph"). [See the present writer's article "Righteousness" in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. IV.]

NOTE III (p. lx).

SOME CRITICAL THEORIES OF THE COMPOSITION OF CHS. XL.—LXVI.

In order to shew how complicated the problem of the literary structure of this prophecy has been felt to be, the views of some recent scholars may be briefly noticed. Ewald and Dillmann are the chief representatives of the school which recognizes the unity of the second Isaiah while admitting that the author has made use of earlier written material. Ewald holds that ch. xl. 1, 2, lii. 13—liii. 12, lvi. 9—lvii. 11, are passages borrowed from pre-exilic prophets, while lviii. 1—lix. 20 is taken from an exilic predecessor of the author. The first edition of the prophecies contained two books, ch. xl.—xlviii., xlix.—lx.; ch. lxi. 1—lxiii. 6 and lxiii. 7—lxvi. 25 are two additions made by the author himself.—Dillmann's position is somewhat similar. The influence of earlier prophets can be traced more or less clearly in the

language of lii. 13—liii. 12, lvi. 9—lvii. 13, lviii. and lix.; and in other passages the possibility of later alterations is conceded. The original prophecy consisted of two books, xl.—xlviii. and xlix.—lxii.; and there are two appendices, lxiii. 1—6 and lxiii. 7—lxvi. 25. The whole, however, is held to have been completed before the end of the Exile.—Cheyne, who had previously convinced himself of the post-exilic origin of certain portions of the prophecy (lvi. 1—8, lviii., lix., lxiii.—lxvi.), now accepts the conclusions of Duhm, with some important modifications. While Duhm assigns the whole of ch. lvi.—lxvi. to a single author (to whom he gives the name of Trito-Isaiah) Cheyne carries the analysis further, and finds evidence that several hands have been engaged in the compilation of these discourses. The collection as a whole, however, is still regarded as a product of the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, the only important exception being lxiii. 7—lxiv. 12, which is brought down to the troubled period under Artaxerxes Ochus (see Vol. I. p. 204).—Kuenen (1889, *Onderzoek*, § 49) also divided the prophecy into two parts, one exilic and the other post-exilic. But to the exilic writer he assigned only ch. xl.—xlix., lii. 1—12, and possibly lii. 13—liii. 12. All the rest he considered to be the work of various prophets living in Palestine after the Return.—Cornill (1896, *Einleitung*³ pp. 157—161) occupies a position intermediate between those of Dillmann and Kuenen. He holds that the two books, ch. xl.—xlviii., xlix.—lxii. were both written by the second Isaiah, the former in Babylonia before the close of the Exile, the latter in Palestine after the Restoration. The remaining chapters (lxiii.—lxvi.) cannot, he thinks, be ascribed at least in their present form to the author of xl.—lxii.—Kosters (*Theol. Tijdschrift*, 1896, pp. 577—623) agrees with Cheyne as to the composition of ch. lvi.—lxvi.; but differs from him with regard to xlix.—lv., which (following Kuenen) he considers to be another collection of prophecies delivered in Palestine. He advocates a very complicated theory of the origin of the four "Servant-passages"; and his view is partly influenced by his theory of the history of the restoration period (on which cf. Davidson, *The Exile &c.* p. 115).—A somewhat peculiar view is adopted by Bredenkamp (1887), of which the distinctive feature is that ch. xl.—lxvi. contain a nucleus of genuine Isaianic passages, which have been amplified and published by a prophet of the Exile period. See further, Driver, *Isaiah*² p. 211, and *Introduction*⁶, pp. 244 ff.

Several of these theories suggest the enquiry how far the hypothesis of a post-exilic date for some of the chapters may be compatible with identity of authorship. If the writer of ch. xl.—xlviii. lived in Babylonia it is reasonable to suppose that he returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel and Joshua in 536; and if he was a very young man at the beginning of his work, his active career might nearly extend over the first half-century after the Restoration. Can the indications of post-exilic origin be satisfactorily explained on the assumption that the Palestinian discourses were written within that period and by the original author himself? The suggestion is not to be altogether disregarded, but the balance of probability would seem to be against it. Several of the passages appear to presuppose a longer experience of life in Palestine

than can be reasonably attributed to a contemporary of Zerubbabel; the division of parties suits the age of Malachi better than that of Haggai and Zechariah; and the corruption of the ruling classes is not likely to have proceeded so far in the years immediately following the removal of Zerubbabel and Joshua. On the whole, it may be said that if the arguments for post-exilic authorship be valid at all, they point to the conclusion that the last division of the prophecy was written on the eve of the great reformation under Nehemiah (444).

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